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1853.

MAPLETON;

OR,

More Work for the Maine Law.

"The law which restrains a man from doing mischief to his fellow-citizens, though it diminish the natural, increases the civil, liberty of mankind." — BLACKSTONE.

SECOND EDITION.

BOSTON:
JENKS, HICKLING AND SWAN.
1853.

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PREFACE.

The parabolic and dramatic style is as old as literature. It was adopted by Him who had lessons of highest import to impart; because truth in action is far more effective than truth in abstraction. Humanity in the story of the good Samaritan, and penitence in that of the Prodigal Son, touch the heart as they could not in the most finished disquisition.

Those who brand every book of the kind as *a novel*, in an offensive sense, are at war with the constitution of our nature. This form of literature meets an instinctive want, which must be met in some way, — if not with sentiments to enlighten, enlarge and ennoble, then with those to weaken, wither and debase. Instead of carping against light literature, it were better to charge it with truths and influences purifying, profound and enduring, and send it abroad on a mission of love to mankind. The evil is not in the use, but in the abuse.

Not the rocks, mountains, and valleys of Greece, nor the physical scenery of England, has made it what it is in the world of mind; but the creations of genius by which it is adorned. So, till a national literature of our own has cast its diviner hues upon our scenery, not even Niagara can rise to its proper position in the regards of mankind.

This work is a draught upon materials which have been some years accumulating, in the author's endeavor to form a style coincident with the habits and sympathies of the living age. The didactic and abstract, much as he might prefer them, are not the weapons for a steam and lightning movement. If the mountain will not come to Mahomet, why, then, Mahomet must go to the mountain. If witches can only be shot with silver, what is the use of firing lead? Are any grieved that the age will not bear elaborate writing, "I more;" but who is able to fight against destiny?

This story is not so extraordinary as the facts which it adumbrates. The caricature is not here, but in real life. Had the author's sketches reached the extreme limit of history, they would have lacked the essential requisite of an air of credibility.

"A love-story on so grave a theme! — is this admissible?" This objection the author can better meet than vouch for his tact in managing so

delicate a subject. It is only in the social relations of a drunkard's children that the injury to them fully appears. Especially is this true of those who are born to a higher destiny than their unfortunate domestic connections will permit them to reach. They are eaglets with plucked plumage and broken wing, falling prone from their native sphere. O, the pangs and tears thus extorted are too deep, too intense, too profuse, for pen or pencil!

The work is a humble contribution to a great reform in morals and legislation. The profounder depths of the subject have not been reached, much as has been spoken and written in the temperance reformation. The alcoholic currents flow deep down under forms of religious manifestation, under inspirations of genius, under legislative, diplomatic and judicial agencies, under military prowess and valor, under hereditary disease and degeneracy, yea, under all the interests of humanity; nor have they yet fully gushed forth through any of the openings of a vastly accumulated temperance literature. We see them not, we heed them not. The hissings and convolutions of the many-headed dragon have been described; but the venom which he infuses into the sources of our blood, into the atmosphere of thought and sentiment, and into all the subtler elements of life, what painter can depict, what author or orator describe?

Two hundred years of legislation against drunkenness have accomplished comparatively little. Everywhere, under our old license laws, its seductive madness may be indulged in for a few cents. Had the liquor traffic been as free as that of corn, cloth or cotton, drunkenness would have been scarcely easier or cheaper.

What is to be done? Shall we leave the traffic to its course, or control it by stringent legislation? If left to its course, or to the present licensed causes of crime, humanity requires a kindlier provision for those who are thus made criminal than prisons, penitentiaries, poor-houses and the hangman's rope. Far better that the power now exerted in licensing the temptation should exercise its undoubted prerogative in prohibiting, under stringent and prompt penalties, the sale of intoxicating drinks as a beverage.

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MAPLETON;

OR,

MORE WORK FOR THE MAINE LAW.

CHAPTER I.

NOCTURNAL SCENE — A GREAT DANGER.

"As monumental bronze unchanged his look,—
A soul that pity touched, but never shook;
Trained, from his tree-rocked cradle to his bier,
The fierce extremes of good and ill to brook
Impassive — fearing but the shame of fear —
A stoic of the woods — a man without a tear." — CAMPBELL.

"My dear Charles," said Mrs. Douglass, "how have you been, since you left us?"

"Been, mother!" replied the boy, with an effort to laugh in spite of his tears, "been as well as I could."

"Why do you weep, my son?"

"I do not weep, do I?" said the boy, forcing his ruddy face into a reluctant laugh. "What a great country, mother! noble trees!"

"And fine roads, too," added Mr. Douglass, forcing his horses through a deep slough, which Charles, essaying to do with his team, got fast in the mud.

"Ho, there, men!" cried Mr. Douglass; "bring your

levers, seize a rail,—anything to help this boy out of the mire."

"He, ho, heave!—he, ho, heave!—all together,—now again try it! he, ho, heave!" cried a dozen voices, while crack, crack, went the whip, urging the tired horses to their utmost endeavors, so that with difficulty at length the wagon was lifted out of the slough.

Here began the migrating sorrows of the Douglass family. All before had been mere anticipation. This begins the rugged reality of an outcast life, remote from the scenes of other years, driven out by the demon of intemperance, which still haunted them with fears and forebodings for the future, as it had robbed them in the past of all that the heart holds most dear. Charles had left his native place in full glee. The journey and new-country life were full of excitement to his ardent imagination. He and his fellow-teamsters had started the goods a few days in advance of the family, whose lighter vehicle and fleeter horses had overtaken them at this point. They had just descended a steep hill to the level of the country below,—a country stretching off to a distance of ten miles, where it bordered on one of the great western lakes, and, at the time of which we are speaking, was covered with a forest of unusual density. It was a forest which began at this point to be interspersed with an enormous growth of evergreens, beneath which day was always dusky, and night gloomy and hideous.

"Charles, my child," said Mrs. Douglass, after they had passed the slough, "I fear you are not so happy in moving as you expected."

"O, mother!" replied the boy, "I never saw such times as these. It seems to me our old hencoop is pleasanter than any house I have seen since I left home."

"Where did you sleep last night, Charles?" inquired his father.

"We staid at Beach's, on the Ilissus, which was so thronged with emigrants that we felt ourselves fortunate to find a plank apiece to sleep on."

"The Ilissus!" exclaimed Mr. Douglass; "pray where did you get that name? Beach keeps on Mud Creek."

"Beach himself told me, with much pride," said Charles, "that his was the oldest tavern-stand west of the Cayahoga, and that it gloried in a location on the flowery banks of the famed Ilissus." At this, father, mother and son, broke forth into uproarious laughter, in spite of their gloomy condition.

"Beach has a classic imagination," said Mr. Douglass, "to convert the miserable fever-and-ague hole on which he lives into so renowned a stream; it will make the old Attic poets mutter in their graves. That will be a fine story for Harry, when you see him again."

"Well, there is one good thing," said Mrs. Douglass; "Beach keeps a temperance house."

"How did you leave Harry?" inquired Charles, beginning to weep again, at the mention of this most intimate of his school companions.

"Cheer up, my son!" said Mr. Douglass.

"Cheer up, father!" rejoined Charles, still determined to get the better of his home-sick feelings.

"Good-by, Charley,— good-by, Charley,— good-by!" cried the younger children, as their father plied the whip, and left their eldest brother behind to the bitterness of his own solitary reflections.

Though other teams were in advance of Charles, he was the sole occupant of his own in bringing up the rear. It was

near sundown, and five or six miles of the worst road ever travelled remained, before reaching the inn where they proposed to pass the night. The intervening forest was almost unbroken, in which the darkness soon became so profound that he could not see his hand before his face. Here the wild beasts had their lair, and held nocturnal revels. Here the hideous howling of wolves, with the humdrum sound of the hedge-hog from his hollow tree, and a thousand dismal voices, as of ghosts stalking in the gloom profound, soon opened upon Charles a scene of fearfulness and terror of which his susceptible imagination took an impression never to be effaced. Dolefully crept his team along over the corduroy bridges and through the splashing mud-holes, following the leading of a lamp carried by the one at the head of the defile. Thoughts of the past and of the future troubled the poor boy's mind. He saw the lines of sorrow in his mother's face as she passed him, and it went to his heart. He knew how good and noble his father was by nature, but how sadly fallen through the seductive habits of fashionable society. He had drank as a gentleman, till it ended in his drinking as a sot. He had stood in the highest rank of society, till what was deemed honorable to his position had brought him to the lowest, and sunk him and his family in the slough of poverty and disgrace. He had reformed, it is true; but too late to recover caste in the cherished home of his ancestors, and was, therefore, driven to seek it in distant emigration. Charles was old enough to realize the cause of his family's misfortunes; and now it preyed upon his mind, and added to the pain of his dark and dismal journey.

At length, his horses came to a dead stand. He plied his whip, goaded, coaxed, and scolded them, but all to no purpose. His manly feelings repelled the idea of betraying fear

by calling for help. He dismounted, to lighten the burden and give him greater command of his dispirited horses; but still the immobility of a stone held them dead in their tracks. He now lifted up his voice to the men with all his might; but it was too late,—he could not make himself heard. What to do he did not know; and yet his courage was roused to the utmost, having increased with his increasing cause of fear. But his danger was greater than he knew; for near him, on an uprooted tree which lay on a superincumbent mass of underbrush several feet above the ground, a panther, the fiercest of feline animals, was pacing to and fro. His eyes shone in the darkness like balls of fire. Charles saw them, though not with much alarm, because he knew not their nature, supposing it to be phosphorescence; and yet the motion seemed to him strange and unaccountable. The monster crept slowly along on his downy feet to the point of the tree nearest his victim, where he "sat squat like a toad," with an excited motion of the tail, such as is common in this species of animals as they are about to pounce upon their prey. Charles was now more alarmed, and called lustily for help, though he was not aware of the imminence of his danger, nor did escape seem possible, had he known it ever so well. No response was given to his call, and there the poor fellow stood in the very jaws of death, under the impenetrable curtain of night's deepest gloom, in the bosom of a howling wilderness.

O, horrible! Alas, to what straits are innocent children reduced by the recreant habits of parents! Measuring with his burning eyes the distance, the monster gathered up all his mighty strength for a fierce and unfailing leap upon the boy's throat, and then darted like lightning towards him, when, lo! a flash lighted up the gloom, a gun exploded, and

he heard at his feet a heavy fall, with hissing, bounding, snarling, gurgling blood spirting in his face, and all the signs of a feline animal in the agonies of death. Before he had time to collect his thoughts, all at once a torch flamed up, revealing a tall, yellow man, with tattooed features, and the cut rims of his ears hanging pendent, with coal-black eyes, and a horrid mien. It was an Indian, who was reposing for the night on a couch of evergreens after the fatigue of the chase, and who, awakened by the loud outcry of the boy, had caught sight of the panther's flaming eyes just in season to level his trusty rifle and pierce him through the head at the instant of his leap, so that he fell dead at the feet of his victim. Charles had never seen an Indian before; and now to meet one at such a time, and under such circumstances, made the blood leap through his veins with accelerated force, and the agony of an imaginary danger was far greater than the real one which he had just escaped. When the savage, with his blazing torch, moved towards him, he was almost beside himself with fear.

The guttural articulation of sounds which he could not understand would have greatly increased his fears, had not the motions and signs of the Indian soon assured him that under his hideous appearance lurked only kindly intentions. He explored with his torch the nature of the boy's trouble, and set himself to the task of relieving him the best way he could. By this time the men with the forward teams, having missed their youthful charge, had reached the scene of action; and, after a due amount of astonishment at what had happened, they proceeded to whip up the partially rested horses to an endeavor towards progress.

The Indian, whose name was Canaudeh, was the only relic of a tribe which had perished in the all-consuming fires of

alcohol. He himself had been in the last stages of the same infatuation; but, coming to a sense of his danger, and agonized by the death of his kindred, had resolved, with savage firmness, never to taste another drop of the poison, and thus had survived as the monument of an unwritten temperance pledge. He now roamed, a solitary hunter, over those wilds which, as the chief of his tribe, he had once ruled with regal power. Thus rum's victims from the two extremes of civilized and uncivilized life had met, in the persons of the boy and the savage, and under circumstances of darkness and danger suited to their own sad experience from this bane of society. There grew up, after this, a mutual interest between the two, which made them sharers in some of the events we are now to record.

Onward the emigrant wagons trundled; over roots, over logs, through mud and through water, compounded into a bottomless chaos; heaving, pitching, rolling, tossing,—man and beast, as it were, dead with fatigue, and seeking their entombment in the inn and its stables to await the resurrection of brighter day.

CHAPTER II.

THE GROGGERY — A GREATER DANGER.

"Drink and be mad, then, — 't is your country bids!
Gloriously drunk, obey the important call!
Her cause demands the assistance of your throats;
Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more."— COWPER.

THE inn was a plain building, partly log and partly framed, or an original forest-cabin, bought out by a wealthier

proprietor, and wedded to a framed building in white paint, presenting the contrast of Othello and Desdemona. The bar was in the black or devil's part, as it was called, directly adjoining the parlor in the framed building; a common atmosphere of rum and tobacco exhalations and fetid breaths, pervading both rooms alike, as the door between the two was ever on the swing. In one side of the bar-room was a genuine log-cabin fireplace, with stone wall without jamb or mantel-piece, reclining against the logs, and surmounted by a chimney made of sticks and mud, in the form of a tunnel, with the little end upward, serving the three-fold purpose of funnel, ventilator, and skylight. The hearth was the household sewer, to which the disgusting overflowings of rum and tobacco found their way. The bar itself was a strong enclosure of boards and lattice-work, from which issued an incessant stream of poison, carrying madness to the mind, disease and death to the body, and poverty and woe to families.

One of the best apartments was occupied, on the night of the Douglass' arrival, by two gentlemen; one a great landholder, and owner of the inn, farm, and all its appurtenances, while the other was his lawyer and a member of the legislature. Both had just come from their distant homes in the East,—the landholder to look after his own estates in these parts, and the other to assist him, and also to attend to the business of another client, who was expected soon to emigrate. The name of the landholder was Skampton, known among his neighbors as the patron, or patroon; that of the lawyer was Marldon, and that of his other client Harcourt.

The room occupied by these gentlemen had a cheerful fire blazing on the hearth,—more to expel damp than cold; two single beds,—the only articles of the kind in the house; a plain table in the midst of the room, with a mug of whiskey-

punch smoking in the centre; and a due allowance of chairs, with a small looking-glass. This, for a new country, as they say, was more than common doings. Marldon took the punch which he had just ordered, and, filling a glass, offered it to Skampton, saying, "Drink, my friend, and drive away dull care!"

"No, Marldon; excuse me,—I never drink," said Skampton.

"What! you never drink, and make so much out of drinking?"

"Well, no one is encouraged to drink by my example; I 've that to say for myself,—I 've a clear conscience here. But every one to his taste. Because people are determined to 'put an enemy into their mouths to steal away their brains,' must I relinquish my business and my revenues? Must I give up this house because people come here to drink? If they are determined to have a place of the kind among them, may not I, who am doing what good I can with my money, reap the advantage as well as others, and thus convert the income into channels of benevolence?"

"Your reasoning is sound, my worthy client, though your example strikes me — please excuse it — as a little overstrained. So long as Scotch whiskey and warm punch are such acceptable libations to Morpheus, after a fatiguing day, such abstinence is out of the question to me;" saying which, he put the full glass to his own lips, quaffed its contents with a gusto, and, smacking his lips, added, "Good, good! fit for the gods!"

"By the way, Marldon, how does the Liquor Bill fare in the House?"

"Dead and damned, I can assure you."

"You are too harsh in your language."

"I only quote the words of our enemies, these renegade lecturers, who say of one of us, when he kicks the bucket, 'Gone to a drunkard's grave, dead and damned.' If they say this of a *man*, may I not say it of this confounded *bill?* That cursed law has deprived me of more business, so far as the states have been fool enough to adopt it, than anything which has happened since I entered the profession; and I have sworn, by all the gods, good, bad and indifferent, that our state shall not be fooled into it. It shall not, it cannot pass!"

"What makes you speak so confidently, Marldon? Had the House rejected it before you left?"

"No, I left in the midst of the discussion,—forced away by Harcourt's business, as well as yours. (Poor fellow! his commercial speculations have exploded, I suppose you know.) But, then, I found that not a few of the House are habitual drinkers, and a man will not vote the cup from his mouth. D' ye think I'd vote away this comfort?" he added, drinking again.

"Is that your only reason? That don't strike me as sufficient; for they can lay it by in quantities, and keep their own bar. These demagogues will do anything to court the people. What do the people say?"

"O, they make an outcry to please these blackguard lecturers; but we know how to bring them right. Influence and money will knock them into pi."

"Then you think the representatives, left to themselves, will go against the bill?"

"Yes, all but the fanatics; and even they complain that it is not stringent enough."

"Not stringent enough?"

"No, not stringent enough. They go for pouring the

'good cratur' into the gutter. This is strongly mooted in one of our Eastern states. These rascally lecturers have fed them with cayenne so long, that they now demand fire. They will go yet for burning the houses in which rum is found. There is no end to the demand of these agitators."

"What are we coming to!" said Skampton, raising his hands in blank astonishment.

"Coming to! that's as plain as the nose on a man's face: coming to hanging up by the neck every rum-dealer; coming to burning his house over the heads of his family; coming to worse times than ever heretic-burning inflicted upon the world. There is no telling what we shall come to, with the public run mad."

"Was ever such persecution waged upon unoffending men! What is to be done? Is there no hope of protecting ourselves and our business?" said Skampton, anxiously.

"I think there is," said the lawyer. "In the first place, we have all the drinking members of the House on our side. Then, the speaking is done chiefly by my profession, and we understand too well which side our bread is buttered to go against the interests of some of our best clients. Besides, the liquor-dealers are all-powerful. Their gains were never so great as since temperance times. The conscientious fools who have given up the business turned their profits over to those who are not so mealy mouthed; and the present enormous profits of these few make them rabid against stringent legislation, and give them money to buy votes, newspaper-squibs, and to do, in various ways, the most deadly execution in opposition to it. The whole thing, depend upon it, will prove an abortion."

"May a gracious Providence so order!" said Skampton,

with an expression that showed how much the subject had preyed upon his mind.

In the midst of this conversation a gentle rap was heard at the door. Skampton arose and opened it, when he was surprised to meet a lady, whose countenance was one of intelligence and refinement, but overcast with anxiety and distress. It was Mrs. Douglass, a lady now somewhat over thirty, matronly in appearance, and dignified in deportment, who desired a word with the gentleman that owned the inn.

"I am that gentleman," said Skampton; "walk in, madam."

She did so, and occupied a chair which he politely handed her. She hesitated a moment how to introduce the subject that bore so heavily upon her heart. At length she said, with an effort to restrain her tears, "I understand, sir, that an order from you will be respected in this house."

"I own it, madam, but have nothing to do with its management; that belongs to my tenant, our landlord. If you have any business pertaining to the house, you must look to him."

"I have seen the landlord, sir, but in vain, I am sorry to say," she added, with a sigh; and the tears now fell profusely down her fine face, in which some old grief had evidently written its deep lines.

"What troubles you, madam? what do you desire? has anything happened since you came to the house?" inquired Skampton, with an expression more repulsive than soothing.

"It is a delicate subject, sir, for a wife, especially one who has the best and most generous husband in the world, when he is himself. But, alas! he has not the power, under all circumstances, to be himself. He was born in affluence, and spent his early years where custom made the use of strong drink

necessary to a manly character and gentlemanly position. He had no natural propensity for it,—it was rather disgusting to him than otherwise; he was pure, noble, and an honor to human nature. Sir, you will excuse a wife's partiality in saying to you, a stranger, what was a matter of notoriety in our former home. But habit wrought such a change in his nervous system, or created such an appetite for strong drink, that he cannot resist the temptation to use it to excess, whenever it is brought within his reach, and he tastes it at all. He went to all lengths in dissipation; wasted my patrimony and the most of his own,—all except a farm not many miles from this, inherited from his grandfather,—and finally brought on delirium tremens, from which he just escaped with his life. So horrible were his sufferings that he did not return to his cups when he recovered, but has lived now two years without tasting a drop. The happiness of our house is restored, and our affairs have become so prosperous that we are going to our new farm, with the means of establishing our young family in comfort, and to acquire for them, I trust, a quiet home and a good reputation. My great anxiety is, to guard my husband against the temptation to his former habits, to which he cannot return without involving us all in irretrievable ruin."

"Well, what of that?" said Skampton, in a dry and withering manner. "If a man will make a beast of himself, an angel cannot save him."

"But, sir," said Mrs. Douglass, with an expression of grief that would have touched any other heart, "there is everything to me and my little ones in it. If he were insane, think you I could trust him in a room with deadly weapons? Should I not implore the occupant of such a room to be on his guard? A room where intoxicating drinks are freely dealt

out is equally fatal to my husband, whatever you please to name him."

"Why then did you bring him here?" said Skampton, with great nonchalance.

"O that it had been possible to avoid coming! We must emigrate,— we must stop somewhere. Such a retinue as ours could not be admitted to a private dwelling; and there was no alternative but to stop here or expose our famished company supperless to the dews of the night. Necessity has compelled us hither; and now, to save my husband, this — this is all my concern. In the name of humanity, sir, I beseech you to help me!"

"What can I do, woman? Are you mad?"

"All I ask is, that you give orders to your tenant that not a drop which intoxicates be allowed my husband, for money or persuasion. Let all he would be likely to buy be added to our bill,— I will freely pay it; but will you not, for my sake, let the poison itself be withheld? Will you not take pity on my helpless children, and do as much as this?"

"Why should this be necessary, if your husband has become a temperance man?" said Skampton, with a sneer at a movement which he always abhorred.

"O, he is not proof against temptation. This is his first trial, I think; and I see, by his movements, that he cannot withstand it. The instinct of a wife has revealed to me this dreadful truth. He is fatigued with a long journey; is depressed at parting from all the friends and associates of former years; has been, for an hour or two, restive and wretched, as if he felt himself spell-bound,— held by the serpent's bewitching eye,— and the very odor of alcohol has disarmed him of his powers of resistance; so that I know he will drink if he can get it, and we shall be ruined. He has

been, for some time, just as miserable as misery can make him."

"Speak to the landlord, madam; the house is his, and not mine. I have contracted the use of it to him, and have no more control over it than you have."

"I have done it, sir; but he only laughs, and insults me."

"Every trade must live," said Skampton. "I have gone to great expense in purchasing and fitting up this house for the public accommodation. It is a great thoroughfare; and thousands have suffered just as you speak of, by depending on private accommodations. I could not keep the house myself, but let it to one who makes that his business. His best profits come from his bar. If it were not for that, he would have to charge what many could not afford to pay for food and lodgings. Would you have him sacrifice all his profits? If your husband is disposed to make a beast of himself, I am not to blame. Would you have me cut in upon the profits of the house? If I do it once, I may again and again, and there would be no end to it. I shall have nothing to do in the matter."

Seeing that further remonstrance was useless, the grief-stricken wife in silent sorrow rose and left the room. Alas! how numerous are the wives in Europe and America of whom she is the sad, sad representative!

"Served her right," said Marldon, sipping his punch; adding, "It 's a scene; women are made to weep, and it does them good. She 'll feel the better for it. She has the unction of feeling herself a martyr, and you her executioner. I have had my trials with women's tears in my day, I can assure you; and I know there 's no way but to be firm,— be firm. Human nature is what it is. You and I did not make

it so; but, if we can make something out of its being so, we should be confounded fools to let a woman's tears pick our pockets."

"It would gratify me to please the woman," replied Skampton, a little shocked by this bold logic; "but, then, Marldon, I have no right. I might give up *my* profits; but I have made a contract with my tenant to give over to him the stand, with all its appurtenances, for him to make the most he can out of its business, and it would not be right for me to subtract from his income. I should violate my contract, which, you know, I am not a man to do."

"No, not right, not legal neither," said the lawyer. "He could sue you for damages on the terms of your lease. Zounds! I 'd like to manage his suit against you, if you had listened to this piece of female impertinence. All bargains, to stand, must show a *quid pro quo*, of which you would take away the *quid* if you interfered with the business of the bar."

This legal quid suggested the idea of his tobacco quid; whereupon, taking out his silver case stowed full of the vegetable bane,—like putrefaction in a gilded coffin,—he proceeded to surcharge one of his cheeks till it projected like a wen, and then dropping his head, now soporific from alcohol and tobacco, he sunk into a profound sleep.

CHAPTER III.

IT IS A FEARFUL NIGHT.

"Shorten my days thou canst with sullen sorrow,
And pluck nights from me, but not lend a morrow.
Thou canst help time to furrow me with age,
But stop no wrinkle in his pilgrimage."—SHAKSPEARE.

WHEN Mrs. Douglass reached the parlor, she found her husband pacing to and fro in an excited manner, with his eyes fixed upon the open door into the bar-room, which was filled with people in the various stages of intoxication, from the first fiery glass to beastly, unconscious helplessness. She saw, she felt, that the fumes from this hell were fatal to his better impulses, and that he was on the point of making a hopeless plunge into the abyss. He heeded her not when she entered, so intent was his mind upon the burning appetite, and the means of its gratification. But she could not give him over. Denied all protection from the house or its owner, she now resolved to exert her utmost skill to save her husband, thankful that not a drop of the maddening liquid had yet mingled with his blood since they entered the house. Wiping her eyes, and clothing her face in the winning smiles of a wife's devoted love, the sweetest of earthly passions, she took him by the arm and paced to and fro with him, saying every winning thing which her ingenuity could suggest, to divert him, and enable him to preserve the command of himself.

"My dear George," said she, "this is certainly a beauti-

ful country; it is much pleasanter than I feared I should find it."

"Glad of it," said he, laconically, as if hardly conscious of what passed, from the fiery rage of one feeling within.

"I wish our Charles was here," she added; "I desire our children every moment under my eye."

"So do I, but I can't expect it," he rejoined, in the same dry manner, still occupied with his one consuming idea.

"How far have we yet to go, George?"

"Fifteen miles," he said. He had no sooner spoken than a gentleman and lady entered, with three beautiful children, and, gazing at them a moment, he rushed forward and seized the gentleman by the hand, exclaiming, "Bless me! Charles Durham, is this you?"

"Possible, Douglass!" said the man, staring intently; "are you here? How glad I am to meet you, after this long, long time!"

"Charles, you are a noble fellow," replied Douglass, "and look as well as ever, only more manly; and this is your wife, I suppose."

"Mr. Douglass, my dear Amelia, of whom you have heard me speak so often as my chum and dearest of all my schoolmates," said the man, introducing his wife; "and Mrs. Douglass, I suppose?"

"Yes, Mrs. Douglass, who has heard as much of Durham as your wife has of Douglass."

The two groups of children were also introduced, each falling into its place as naturally as if they had lived together for years. Children and kittens are never strangers.

Mrs. Douglass assumed an air of the utmost civility to her husband's friend, though the name of Charles Durham was a thunderbolt to all her hopes of saving him, on account of the

much she had heard of their former convivial intercourse. She feared that to part without drinking together would be impossible; and she knew that tasting one drop would involve her husband in certain intoxication, to be continued perhaps for days, till "delirium" came to end his wayward career. O, the agony of a wife with such a spectre before her mind!

Durham was a man of about thirty, several years younger than Mr. Douglass, extremely elegant in person and manners, and withal so well dressed, and apparently in such fine condition, that it occurred to Mrs. Douglass, as an encouragement, that perhaps he might have become a teetotaller. His wife was a lady of twenty-five, with a lively and sparkling expression of face, beautiful form and features, with a profusion of rich auburn hair that hung in ringlets around a forehead of marble polish and whiteness, and cheeks in which the lily and the rose had blended their choicest hues. Though the mother of three children, she still retained much of the freshness and elasticity of "sweet sixteen." The children were tastefully dressed, well-behaved, and altogether it was one of the most engaging family groups. She had been considered an heiress, and her husband, the only son of distinguished parents, was thought "the greatest catch" in the whole community.

It was not customary then to make much account of the occasional "sprees" of a young gentleman of fashion; and hence the frequent aberrations of Durham were regarded rather as evidence of spirit, or as an evil of which time would effect a cure. But, unlike Douglass, his appetite for strong drink was inherited both from father and mother, neither of whom could be said to be drunkards, but whose *temperate* drinking had so far wrought upon their hidden nature as to taint the blood of this sole heir of their name and their for-

tune. Charles would have his high times, even from childhood; though, whether drunk or sober, he was always one of the best-natured fellows in the world. His wife loved him devotedly, though he had caused her much trouble, and had wasted their fortune, except the means of a very moderate beginning in the new country. She still clung to the hope that, being there out of the way of temptation, he would reform, and they should be a prosperous and happy family. Indeed, there were many points of resemblance, as well as of dissimilarity, in the domestic history and present condition of these boon companions of college-life. For the sake of his dear Amelia, whom Durham loved to adoration, how did he curse his habits and his nature! How did he long to be where the bane could never reach him more! With what tearful eyes did he sometimes regard his children, two girls and a boy, in whom he felt all a father's pride and joy! But still the serpent was coiled round his heart, and no tears or resolutions of his own, no ties of family and home, could disengage him from the folds and fangs of the destroyer. Both these wives were sharers in the same fear, the moment of entering this hell. Had they fallen into a den of robbers, it would have been no more tormenting,— no more fatal in its consequences.

The two gentlemen soon became absorbed in conversation on by-gone days, their wives saying or doing little except to watch them with trembling solicitude, the more so from the convivial associations revived by their remarks and allusions. At length, Mrs. Durham was called to superintend her children's retirement for the night, and Mrs. Douglass was left to keep vigils alone. Her children were already in bed, though the infant slept fitfully, after the fatigue and exposure of so long a journey. A moment more, and it began to

scream, as if it were in agony, and the anxious mother was compelled to leave the parlor. She soothed the little one, and, taking it in her arms, returned to her post, determined to throw herself and screaming child across her husband's pathway to the bar, if that should be necessary to save him from the charmed eye and deadly fangs of the serpent which from that den lured to deceive and destroy. But, alas! it was too late. The moment she left the room, Durham said to his friend, "Come, we must have a treat over this unexpected meeting."

Glancing his eye stealthily round the room, to make sure that his wife was out of the way, Douglass replied, "Here 's for you, then, in spite of the devil! — what 'll you take?"

"Brandy and water; plain doings, but what 's better?" said Durham. Whereupon to the bar they made their way with nervous haste, and had swallowed each of them half a glass of brandy just as Mrs. Douglass returned with her screaming child.

"O, George! my dearest George!" she exclaimed, running into the bar-room, with her child still screaming. "You know what the effect will be; how can you take that poison?" But the venom had already gone to his brain, and he was stark mad,— partly with excitement, and partly from the effect of the brandy, after so long an abstinence. Lifting himself up to his full length, he turned upon her his burning eyes, and swore, by all the powers above, if she did not leave the room instantly, he would be the death of her. "I 'll have no meddling here, wife!" said he, with a stern countenance.

"That 's right! no petticoat government in this room!" growled the burly-headed, half-drunk landlord, from his pigeon-hole.

"An' faith, me lady, this is not seeming to your grace with your squalling brat, and so I'll hilp ye oot," said an Irish laborer, with a tin dish in his hand, suiting the action to his words, and giving her a push towards the parlor-door.

"That 's right, Pat," said the fiery-faced landlord. "Put her out; we 'll have no Jezebels here!"

Durham smiled upon her benignantly, singing snatches of bacchanalian songs, and beginning to dance about the room in wild and frantic glee,— so that, what with the screaming of the infant, the cursing of Douglass, the singing and dancing of Durham, the brutal remarks of the publican, and the still more brutal conduct of his man, together with the general demonstrations of a drunken brawl among the intoxicated company crowding the bar-room, it was a scene not often witnessed this side of the infernal regions. There was this difference in the effect of strong drink on these two men, — that, while it inflamed Douglass' sense of personal consequence to the state of a judge or a king, and made him combative as a lictor, or executioner, it had directly the contrary effect upon Durham, rendering him extremely bland, loving and jovial, so that nothing was too good for him to give or do for his friends. Both were alike mad,— only the madness of the one was terrific, making nothing safe in his presence, whether limb or life; while that of the other was harmless and happy, full of mirthful romance and seductive song.

"My dear Mrs. Durham, what is to be done?" said Mrs. Douglass, as she met her new-made friend coming to the scene of action.

"O, my dear, I don't know," replied Mrs. Durham, with great concern; "mad, both stark mad, I suppose?"

"Yes, perfectly so, and surrounded by madmen. I have barely escaped with my life."

"What! Charles offer you violence? I never knew that of him."

"No, no! it was not your husband, but mine, and this miserable landlord and his man. Brandy always makes my poor George furious; and it is a miracle that our family are all alive, after what we have gone through."

"I should not mistrust it, from his appearance. He don't look like a man who drinks, and least of all like one to be dangerous, if he did."

"He has not drunk a drop of intoxicating liquor for two years till this fatal night. O, my heavenly Father, what shall I do? — what shall I do? There 's no cure, no cure, but death! It was the delirium tremens that cured him before, but he cannot survive another attack. Nor can he drink without bringing it on, after the shock his constitution has received. O, it is so dreadful, as if all the evil spirits had come in bodily shape to torment a man!"

"Charles never had that terrible disease. His turns of drinking are only periodical, lasting sometimes a week or two; and the intervals between them, at least latterly, have often been long-continued. O, I did hope, in this wilderness country, to get beyond the reach of an enemy which has been the blight of our lives. But it is here,— it is everywhere!" Saying this, she stepped to the bar-room door, and found it fastened now that the prey was secure; but the singing of her husband she could distinctly hear, mingled with the curses of Douglass, who had by this time quarrelled with all who were in a mood for it; and the medley of sounds from the bar-room was more like the wailing and gnashing of teeth in outer darkness, than like the scenes of earth. Owing to their dissimilarity of disposition in the hours of madness, Douglass and Durham never quarrelled between themselves,

but seemed united by a singular tie of affinity, as if alcohol had kindled between them a morbid flame of artificial sympathy and of fellow-feeling. Their wives, seeing how fruitless were attempts to save them, now desisted, and resigned themselves to black despair. Mrs. Douglass' infant continued still its incessant screaming; and, in addition, her anxiety about Charles added another pang to her already lacerated heart. O! could one-millionth part of the misery occasioned by alcohol come distinctly before the law-makers of our land, they could not fail to see their duty to adopt and prosecute a stringent course of legislation against the gigantic evil!

Charles at length arrived, almost dead with fatigue and excitement, from the labors and dangers which he had encountered. Leaving his team to the men, he hastened to the bar-room door from without, and, entering, looked round upon the drunken group, to find some one of whom he might inquire for his family, his supper, and his lodgings. But, before he was aware of what hurt him, he received from his father's fist a blow which knocked him across the room and felled him senseless to the floor. Mrs. Douglass heard the noise, and divined the cause, as she knew her husband's madness was always most embittered against his own family. Resigning her infant to Mrs. Durham, she went out of the hall door, and ran round and entered the bar-room where Charles had just gone in. Her husband, seeing her, made a pass at her head; but the blow was parried by those of the drunken crew who had some humane feelings left, who protected her till she had carried out her child, and placed him on her own bed. For half an hour she stood over him, rubbing his limbs, bathing his head, making hot applications to his chest, and doing everything for his restoration which a mother's

love could dictate. The first thing of which Charles was conscious was his mother's tears falling like rain upon his cheeks, as she stooped down to imprint the kisses of tenderness and concern. The agonized thought of their condition, which now flashed across his mind, drove him almost to madness. His mother, brothers and sisters, with himself, the hapless family of a drunkard, seemed to him the most miserable and the most hopeless of living beings. He wished himself dead, and that they were all dead with him.

"O, mother!" he said, "such another night I never saw, and I pray God I may never see again! I have just escaped death by a wild beast, to find in my own father a still more dangerous foe."

"What do you say, my son? You are wild,—not quite yourself yet."

"Yes, mother," he replied, kissing her; "I *am* myself. Would I were not,—would it were all a dream!" He then related the adventures of his nocturnal drive through the wilderness, at the recital of which she too felt the force and horror of his reflections.

"O, my son! my son! God be praised that you are spared!" she said, and again renewed her fond embrace. "Perhaps it is that you may yet be a comfort to your mother, and the salvation of the family. We must hope,—yes, we must; but for hope, the heart would break."

"O, mother! I see no hope. Better dead than alive. Why had not the humane panther been left to put me out of my misery? Better die by a brute than by one's own father. Why did you not save him from this riot?"

"I did all I could to save him, my dear son. I besought the landlord and the owner of the house not to give him the cup for any consideration. I wept, and begged, and entreated,

but all to no purpose. We are in the hell, and, if we all sink together, I shall have this to reflect upon, that I did what I could to escape it." Mother and son now wept in silence, with arms closely folded round each other's neck, seeming thus to resign themselves to their fate,— the most miserable fate that mother and son ever endured,— that of being a drunkard's wife and child.

"My dear Charles, you have had no supper."

"No, mother, I cannot eat; I never wish to eat again."

"You must eat, my child;" and, calling the only servant who was still up, she ordered tea and toast. The servant, touched with sympathy, hastened to do as she was bidden. After tea Charles revived a little, and soon sunk into a sweet sleep. Mrs. Douglass then joined her new friend in the parlor. Neither of them could sleep. The horrid oaths, angry blows, obscene songs and infernal fumes, of the den into which their husbands had fallen, drove sleep far from them. They walked the room, and wrung their hands in agony. Description falls short of the reality. Imagination must supply the rest. "O, thou invisible spirit of wine! If thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee — devil." Thou art the incarnation of all devils,— lust, revenge, pride, filthiness, suspicion, envy, jealousy, murder. Thy march through the world is strewed with human bones. Thou art baptized in tears and blood. Thy name is legion. There is no wrong which thou dost not instigate, no lust thou dost not inflame, no pang thou dost not render more poignant, no law thou dost not violate, and no virtue nor joy thou dost not despoil! Who hath woe? — who hath sorrow? — who hath contentions? — who hath babbling? — who hath wounds without cause? — who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine."

It was now three o'clock in the morning. Thick mists hung over the face of the world. The stars shone feebly from the ethereal expanse. Night had gathered all its forces to resist the onset of coming day. The distant wolves, prowling over nature's untrimmed and boundless domain, where their reign had never been disputed, kept up an incessant howling to make night hideous. The bat was on the wing, and the owl from his tree-top gave forth his ominous note. The genius of rapine and murder, ensconced in foul exhalations, awaited its victims. The dense darkness of approaching dawn had brought upon animated nature a deeper sleep, and a profounder insensibility to danger. Charles felt the spell, and lay in the lap of unconsciousness. The infant had ceased its moans, and forgotten its sorrows. The household was all quiet, except the wary publican and his hapless victims, to whom he was dealing out "liquid fire and distilled damnation." The ladies, too, still kept vigil, awaiting they knew not what. They could not sleep while the dearest objects of their affection were thus in the hand of the destroyer.

Thus things were situated, when all at once they were aroused from their dreamy despair by yells and screams resounding through the darkness, and echoing from the contiguous forest, as if murder, with all its myrmidons, were indeed out upon its work of blood. The sound did not reach the bar-room; it was neutralized by the more terrible medley within. Mrs. Douglass and her friend hastened to the back door, from which quarter the noise seemed to come, and, looking out, they saw lights from a log-cabin in the yard a few rods back of the main building. They hesitated, irresolute as to what should be done. Blow after blow, accompanied by the stifled shrieks of a female voice, convinced them

that deeds of fearful import were enacting in the cabin. Without reflection, they obeyed the dictates of humanity, and, taking each other by the arm, they groped their way till they could distinctly see, through the crevices of the unplastered logs, a man dealing deadly blows upon the person of a woman. Mrs. Douglass instantly recognized the man as the one with a tin dish who had so violently ejected her from the bar-room. His name, they afterwards learned, was Pat Tooney, the farmer of the establishment, against whom his employer contrived to make an annual liquor-bill equal to his wages, leaving his wife and eight children to support both him and themselves. When Mrs. Douglass saw him, he had come with his cup for his evening pint of whiskey, which, added to what he had drunk in the course of the day, made him quite mad. In this state he began to catechize his wife about her provision for friends whom he expected the next day.

"Have you kilt the turkey, Jenny?"

"Yes, Pathrick," was his wife's submissive reply.

"An' how have ye dhrissed it?" added Pat, full of explosive anger.

"I *drew* it, but could not get the sinews oot of the legs."

"That's beliking your husband's frinds, is't, ye jade?" replied Tooney, striking her a furious blow in the mouth with his fist. Mrs. Tooney screamed from fear and pain, and this it was that called the attention of the ladies. Determined to prosecute the war to the knife, Pat began now to question his wife about some change he had seen in her hands, and threatened to kill her if she did not give a true account. The poor woman tried to obey orders; but, before she had spoken three words, the frenzy took him again, and he struck her so violently in the breast as to knock her down. He then fell to kicking her stomach and side, as she lay on the floor,

when the ladies made bold to break in upon him, and beg him to desist. This only exasperated him the more; and, seizing his wife by the hair of her head, he dragged her about till she was totally insensible. Seemingly alarmed at this symptom,— or perhaps the madness of intoxication beginning to subside,— he seized a pail of water, and dashed it in her face, to revive her, twice repeating the application afterwards from a pitcher. She gasped for breath a moment, and then — as it proved in the event, though not suspected at the moment — she resigned her spirit to the God that gave it. Kneeling down over the head of his deceased wife, the wretch began to say, in plaintive tones, "Jenny, you love me! Do you not love me? do I not love you?" But no voice answered. All was still, awful,— the wife of a drunkard dead by his own hands! The ladies did what they could to restore her, but all to no purpose. Tooney was soon missing, and could not be found. When this fact was made certain, the whole group of children, who had remained hid, like chickens from the hawk, came round the corpse of their mother, uttering lamentations such as the impassioned Irish alone know how to express. The ladies devoted the rest of the night to laying out the corpse, and alleviating the misery of those whose fate so much resembled their own.

Morning — rosy-fingered, celestial, beautiful, true to its promise of relief for the woes of the night — came at length, to greet the expectant emigrants, and to invite them from their human den into the balmy air and sweet light of a new day, to bask in the fragrance and loveliness of nature's fresh and expansive luxuriance. The robin and blue-bird were carolling from their pendent bough, and myriads of dew-drops added lustre and brilliancy to the enchanting scene. The repose without was as profound as if no tempest had

raged within, and the dawn appeared not in the habiliments of sorrow for the events of the night, but in all the brilliancy of her jewelled and variegated robes.

On returning from the cabin to the inn, the ladies found that the landlord had disappeared. His place was supplied by a bar-keeper, who seemed more susceptible to the touches of humanity. They were silent as to what had happened in the Irish family, lest they should be detained as witnesses, and prepared to hasten their departure. Those tenants of the bar-room not too much intoxicated to get away were gone; and their husbands they found on the floor, in each other's arms, dead drunk, and as helpless as they were unconscious. Brandy has its sympathies, and drunkenness its fellow-feeling. The bar-keeper kindly promised, if they awaked and called for more, not to give them another drop. Charles was refreshed by sleep, and, though much bruised, he was able to walk. The whole neighborhood was astir about the murder, but Mrs. Douglass and her friend kept their own counsel. Skampton and Marldon, hearing of the occurrence, deemed it prudent to be off as soon as possible; and they drove away together, before they got their breakfast. The ladies mutually agreed that their safest course would be to leave while their husbands were yet insensible, and incapable of resistance. They were all soon re-packed on board of their wagons, having their drunken husbands stowed away in a place where they could ride without injury; and thus, at length, they made their escape from "this breathing-hole of hell."

CHAPTER IV.

THE NEW HOME.

"*Dun.* This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.
"*Ban.* This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,
By his loved mansionry, that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here; no jutty, frieze, buttress,
Nor coigne of vantage, but this bird hath made
His pendent bed and procreant cradle. Where they
Most breed and haunt, I have observed, the air
Is delicate." SHAKSPEARE.

MRS. DOUGLASS set off with a heavy heart. She clung, with the fondest feelings, to her husband. The scenes which had deprived her of sleep the previous night only put her womanly love to the test, and made it burn with increasing constancy and tenderness. Her heart never went forth to her dear George, her adored husband, with such perfect abandonment. She realized how much it must have cost him to deny for two long years an appetite of such overmastering strength; and he had done it out of regard to her and her children. Virtue practised against such force of resistance seemed to her four-fold more praiseworthy. "O, my George, my dearest George! at what a cost have you maintained so long your temperance! Your appetite has become your misfortune more than your crime. Your crime was in first yielding to the preposterous customs of society. Your wife will love you, George; yes, she will teach her children to love you. She will love you the more that others hate

and despise you. Yes, George! you are my own dear, generous, noble and faithful husband; and all I desire, except — except — what you cannot help — an appetite for strong drink, over which you mourn, more than wife or children, or any one else. I will comfort you, George; yes, I will. Duty and affection alike dictate that I should soothe your anguished feelings." O, who can estimate the purity and strength of a woman's love? Still, she felt for her children. They could not enter into her feelings as a wife. They were more than orphans, and might, in future years, curse their relationship to such a father. Alas! it is far more fatal than relationship to parents who have already died a virtuous death.

As a dictate of more than usual tenderness, she felt that she must have her whole family round her own person; and hence crowded them all with her into the same wagon, with the addition of a driver, as Charles was too much bruised to manage the horses. It was a large vehicle, whose bottom she first covered with bedding, and laid her husband upon it, carefully tucking him up on all sides, with the pillows and bolsters, to prevent his being bruised. Above were two seats, the forward of which she, with baby in arms, occupied, beside the driver; on the hinder one Charles and his two brothers next to himself — George and Samuel — were seated; and the two little girls, Mary and Cornelia, insisted that they would sit on the bottom, beside their papa, to keep him steady. George and Samuel were old enough to have some idea of the cause of their father's trouble; both looked sad, and were silent on the subject, often reaching forward and kissing their dear mamma, as if it might be some mitigation of her sufferings. Their lips would curl with grief, and the tears would start, whenever they did it. Beyond this they gave

no signs of sensibility to what had happened. But the little girls thought their dear papa was only sick; and how full of sympathy and caresses were they! Mary sat on one side, and Cornelia on the other, pressed close against his head, to hold it firm, bestowing kisses on his lips, cheeks, forehead, chin.

"Mamma," said little Mary, "has papa got a fever?—his breath smells so!"

"Don't disturb your father, my love," replied her mother, stung to the quick by the child's allusion to the fetid relic of the bane.

"Papa," said Nelly, "don't you know me?"

"How can he, when he don't see?" replied little Mary.

"Can't you *hear* me, papa?" inquired Nelly again. "Why don't you speak, papa? Dear papa, do speak! speak to your Nelly!"

Thus they travelled for several hours. Their road lay through an unbroken wilderness, where nature's exuberance was unrestrained by art,—a scene of solemn grandeur, full of the inspirations of poetry and romance. The dense shade of enormous tree-tops, interwoven and intertwined, like an over-hanging veil, had so effectually excluded the sun's rays as to kill out the underbrush, and leave an unencumbered surface between the large trunks of the trees which studded the soil. Still, in passing over roots and knolls, the wagon often rolled and pitched at a fearful rate, and all the efforts of the children were necessary to hold their father in his place. Not many minutes intervened when the mild and tearful eyes of Mrs. Douglass were not turned towards him, to see that all was right. At length, in one of those glances of affection, she saw two streams of tears running down his face, to assure her that his consciousness was restored, though

chagrin and mortification kept his eyes closed and his lips sealed. When his little daughters kissed his lips, he would turn away his face, as if fearful of tainting their pure breath by contact with such a mass of pollution as he felt himself to be.

"I am the plague-spot of this innocent group!" he thought within himself. "O that I were dead! I am a grief to my wife, and a shame to my children. I am not fit to be loved by such angels." Ah! could that landlord, and that proprietor of the miserable groggery in which these wounds had been inflicted,— could they have looked into that drunkard's heart, at this moment of returning consciousness, how poor a compensation for so much misery would their paltry gains have appeared! Such a *quid pro quo* is enough to make avarice relent, and covetousness relinquish its gains. Even Marldon might have been touched with pity. The profits thus wrung out of human weakness and vice are a canker upon the soul, to eat into it like fire. It is a merchandise of woman's tears, a trading in worse than orphan grief, dealing out infamy and hopeless ruin to a helpless group of little ones, whom the winds had not otherwise rudely visited, merely for the sorry satisfaction of having a golden stream flowing into one's own purse. O! if one vault of final despair is more dismal than the rest, it will be occupied by the caterer to the drunkard's appetite, the promiscuous dealer in intoxicating drinks, whether by wholesale or retail, by the pipe or by the glass, from the distillery or from the bar, to obtain the proceeds of vice and misery!

We will now give Charles' impressions of his new home in his own words. His recollections are more graphic — though a little over-wrought — than could be expected from a second-hand description. "We reached it at dusk," he says,

"having travelled but fifteen miles the last day,— the roads being rough, and father's condition so peculiar as to more or less retard our progress. He — poor, dear man! — was perfectly himself when we arrived, though miserable as misery could make him. He seemed disappointed and shocked at his own return to a vice which had cost him so much, and against which he had fortified himself by so many resolves. It was several days before he became at all reässured; and then it was more from the consciousness that he was in a town without the accursed traffic in alcohol than from any reliance upon his own virtue. We all gathered round him, and loved him as we never did before. My mother was unremitting in her attentions. My little sisters clung to him every moment he was in the house, from an undefined feeling that he had been unhappy, and might be again. And as for myself and brothers, we were more than ever respectful and obedient to him. Still, I could often detect him weeping bitter tears, as if, however we might feel, he never could forgive himself. But, gradually, our new circumstances and new home, and, more than all, his yet unstained reputation in town, wrought in him the confidence of a new life.

"I was charmed with our new home. The house, the trees, the clouds, all to me had the charm of novelty and romance. It was a block house, built of square beams, carefully hewed and adjusted one upon another, with a layer of lime-mortar between, to make a solid wooden wall. It had three apartments, each eighteen feet square, standing in a row, the whole building being fifty-four feet in length and eighteen wide,— not symmetrical, but convenient. It was whitewashed without and within, thus contrasting beautifully with the leafy canopy which waved above and around. The family-room was the centre, while the right wing was used

for parlor, and the left for sleeping apartments. A half-story above afforded space also for study, storage, and various purposes. It was rural and romantic as a whole, and I always had a home feeling in it to make me regret abandoning it for a more stately mansion. It taught me how independent our happiness is of architectural proportions or costly trappings. This house, and a fifty-acre wheat-field, which we found investing the earth in a rich mantle of green, were the result of my father's attention to the farm before removing his family. He had preserved a young growth of maples directly round the house, to beautify our home. Altogether, it was a sweet place, which poetry might choose for its own, had a man any in his soul.

"On the night of our arrival we laid our beds on the floor in a promiscuous jumble, and cast our fatigued bodies upon them without ceremony, and soon lost ourselves in a dreamless sleep. My father was the only exception, whose heart had evidently been preying upon itself through the night; though his thoughts were turned to account, probably as a means of diversion, in excogitating the plan of a bay-window, to give us a more commanding view of the lake which formed the northern semi-circle of our sensible horizon. Our house stood directly on the bank, and the said window was located over our back or lake door, in the upper story; and seemed literally to overhang a glorious expanse of molten silver, giving light to the room which was assigned to me for a study. I was already, by the way, nearly fitted for college, and here completed my preparation, under the tutelage of my mother, whose father was a clergyman, and had carefully trained her both in the classics and the exact sciences. This bay-window, therefore, is connected in my mind with many

tender and interesting associations, which must be my apology for the minuteness of my allusions.

"The matter of the bay-window being settled, we plunged at once into the turmoil of putting furniture into its place. In the course of a week, each article and utensil had found its proper nook and corner. As for myself, I was too much excited to take an interest in such commonplace affairs. The logging-field, the woods, beach, birds and beasts, had greater charms. With my iron-wood lever I now lifted with the men; now ran to fasten the chain on a log, and watch its reluctant movements as it found its way into the growing heap; now seized the goad, and, with genuine boyish pride, exercised my authority over the oxen, wondering that such huge animals should be so obsequious to my *gee*, *haw*, *whoa!* If ever boy lived on enchanted ground, I did, months after our arrival. My father allowed me my bent, whether to work or play, from an over-indulgence arising probably from the peculiar state of his own mind. I leaped; I ran among the thick trees; I plunged into the limpid lake to regale myself with swimming; I gathered smooth pebbles along its shore; I watched the gyrations of the eagle through the ambient air, and saw him poising his wings to descry his prey, and from his lofty elevation pouncing upon it like lightning, bearing it from its watery home to nourish the ugly growth of his young; I climbed the tallest trees to sport myself with his eaglets in their eyrie; I skimmed the lake in our family yawl, with my younger brothers for oars-men; I watched the summer fallow as it gradually disrobed itself from its black mantle of burnt logs, and put on the beautiful green of growing wheat. I waded brooks and threaded rivers, and gathered nuts and berries, or listened to the evening note of the loon from his hiding-place of mist, like a voice from the unseen

world. I noted the water-spout stretching down from the pendent cloud, like a vast line of pitchy hose, till it touched the surface of the deep, through which the genius of storm pumped a supply for his aërial reservoirs. I once saw a corpse dashed ashore by the curling surf, asking the favor of a forest grave. I gazed upon jostling clouds floating over the watery expanse like the drift of mighty rivers. I beheld stately forests bowing obsequiously to the imperious hurricane, as the slave to the yoke that galls him. All these, and much more of a like character, were among my new-country experiences, charming my fancy and inflaming my imagination.

"My father's land had long been in the family, and known as the Douglass tract; being included in a wider extent of country, that went under the name of Mapleton, from the number of its sugar-trees; an appellation too characteristic and beautiful to survive the rage for a Grecian and Roman nomenclature which afterwards prevailed. It was a large town in its superficial area, including an extent of country twenty miles in length and ten in breadth; and was one of those locations which Providence seemed to reserve, from the foundation of the world, as a gift of special beauty and loveliness to the men of the nineteenth century. The tide of population began now all of a sudden to flood it, as if impatient of the restraint which had so long withheld it from the fair domain.

"I was naturally arbitrary and imperious. I did not know it in my youth, till bitter experience taught me the fact. I domineered over my brothers, who regarded me as their oracle. They rowed the boat, while I, proud as the captain of an Indiaman, sat perched on my little quarter-deck, with helm in hand, 'the monarch of all I surveyed.' When I think that one of these dear associates of my youth

is now no more, dying in a manner that makes me shudder to remember, the victim of a parental madness which had been induced by a nefarious traffic, my blood boils, my indignation is kindled against law and legislation, and I sigh for one sweet hour of converse with that dear brother, to express my sense of the wrongs he suffered from me, and much more from society. But, alas! alas! this is a work which must be postponed to the unknown of eternity. We had our exploring voyages, as we called them, in one of which we visited the river that bounded Mapleton on the west. We started at early dawn. The night had been rainy. I enjoyed as never before the magnificence of lake-scenery: an unbroken wilderness on the one hand, a waste of limpid water on the other, with here and there a sail in the distance, which, through the reflection and refraction of light from a hazy atmosphere, seemed floating among the clouds, a glorious illusion. Beneath us reposed the crystal lake, whose deep bottom was so distinctly visible, through the denser element, as to give our yawl the appearance of being also upborne in air, hanging poised like a sea-gull between heaven and earth. The rising sun was veiled in a curtain of rosy clouds, while the shrill note of the loon, and the piercing scream of the eagle, and the songs of ten thousand meaner birds, floating over the watery expanse from the contiguous shore like the music of angelic harps, added to the deep bass of muttering thunder grumbling and bellowing from a black cloud in the west, all conspired to realize what the Arabian poet felt and sung:

'Bright smiled the morn, till o'er its head
The clouds in thickening foldings spread
A robe of sable hue;
When, gathering round day's golden king,
They stretched their wide o'erspreading wing,
And hid him from our view.

'The rain his absent beams deplored,
And, softened into weeping, poured
Its tears in many a flood;
The lightnings laughed in horrid glare;
The thunder growled in rage; the air
In silent sorrow stood.'

"I urged my weary brothers to increase the force of their oars, that we might hide ourselves from the gathering storm in the channel of the river, which was already visible, and which we were fortunate enough to reach before the blast swept over us. I had never entered this inland channel, and was not prepared for the grotesque scene which opened upon my view. We floated between high banks of perpendicular rocks, covered at the top with tall trees inclining inward, so that their branches seemed to meet and mingle over the channel, forming a vast vegetable arch, like that of an ancient Gothic cathedral. Everything above, beneath, around, indicated the reign of primeval nature; as if some antediluvian patriarch might have selected it for his altar and his shrine. I had then thumbed my Virgil enough to feel the coincidence of the scene with his description, beginning

'Hinc atque hinc vastæ rupes geminique minantur,
In cœlum scopuli, quorum sub vertice laté,' &c.

On this side and that were vast ledges, and two rocks lifting their menacing tops to heaven, under whose jutting summits the secure sea far off reposes in silence; while above was an arbor in the brilliant trees, and a dark wood impended with dismal shade. Under the opposite front a cave opened into the pendent rocks, within which sweet waters are found the home of the nymphs. Here no chains hold the weather-beaten ships, and no anchor with curved fluke binds them! Was this backwoods scene reached by Æneas in his wander-

ings? thought I to myself. I fancied myself an Argonaut, in pursuit of the golden fleece; and lived over those charming days when navigation, cradled in its tiny craft of bark or skin, embowered itself in deeply-wooded bays, and threaded serpentine rivers, under the gloom of overhanging forests, rarely adventuring the storms and quicksands of the open sea.

"My brothers here left me to return with the boat, while I made my way on foot, partly to enjoy the forest scenery, and partly to do an errand for my mother to Mrs. Durham. I followed up the river a few miles, and was still more impressed with its scenery. A deep gulf, ploughed by a giant hand, intersected a comparatively level country, opening a passage for the escaping waters, which leaped from crag to crag, in a succession of thundering cascades,—tumbling, dashing, roaring, foaming, while the eternal forest rejoicing in the sole monopoly of the river-god, gave back his voice with exultant jubilation. The proud divinity was yet undegraded by the servile work of twirling wheels, turning stones, forcing saws, or of ministering in any way to those lordly conquerors who have since despoiled the forest of its ancient rights. Here the bears and wolves had their lair; and here, too, wily troops of naked savages performed their nocturnal orgies. Here blood has flowed under their teeming tomahawks. Ye ledges, trees and cascades, could ye speak your tragic histories, what details of anguish and woe, what notes of captive sorrow, what dire assault of embattled clans, what visages of sullen despair and of cheerful hope, would ye unfold!

"Here I diverged from the river, following up a lateral stream, which leaped and bounded at my feet on its way to mingle with the river and the lake. I had advanced but a few miles, before a beautiful valley, skirted with a circum-

vallation of hills, opened upon my view, and, near its centre, I saw the smoke of Mr. Durham's cottage rising gracefully among the overhanging trees, and settling round upon the contiguous hills. As I approached the cottage, I met Mrs. Durham out among her plants, with trowel and hoe in hand, loosening the earth, extracting weeds, training creepers, and in various ways assisting the efforts of nature. I had seen little of her at the inn; and never, till this moment, was so impressed with her extreme loveliness. The *abandon* of her manner and dress, in such a neglected place, may have added somewhat to the effect. One might almost fancy her a Hebe, a Ceres, or a Juno escaped from Olympus, to find a more congenial haunt towards the setting of the sun. Her cheeks glowed with health, her eyes beamed contentment; and her whole manner was that of a beautiful woman, who had long lived in peril of what was dearer than life, hid in a castellated tower, or securely wandering abroad to inhale the free air and enjoy the boundless prospect of nature. The moment she saw me, she ran, with delight, and caught me by the hand, saying, 'Charles, I am delighted to see you! How is your mother? how are you all?' I had not time to answer before Amelia and Lydia, followed by little Charley, came running to give me a kiss,—it seemed to me of joy, at this relief of their solitude.

"'We are all well, quite well,' said I, as soon as I could disengage myself from the children. 'And how do you like your new home?'

"'It is everything we could ask, except society,' she replied, with a look that revealed the keenness of her feelings at such an exception.

"'Can't have everything we want!' I replied.

"'O, no!' she added, with a tear; 'but how hard it is to

be weaned from society! Still, society is *our* great danger. You understand me. How is your father?'

"'Perfectly himself,' said I; 'attentive to his business; seems happy; so we all are.'

"'One could wish,' she added, 'that society had fewer temptations, that families like ours could live in it with safety. But, so long as governments uphold and protect what is our ruin,—yea, get a part of their revenue out of our insanity, our tears and our infamy,—there is no alternative but escape and hermitage. I am convinced of this; and, therefore, am content to forego home and friendship, and all I love, except the dear ones with whom my being is identified.' The manner of her saying this went to my heart. What! laws such that a lovely woman, who would grace a palace, is compelled to seek security in exile and banishment! Accursed legislation! how long ere some truly Christian and philanthropic Solon shall arise to stay thy barbarous hand? How long ere every tenth family of a community shall cease to live in peril of character, property, limb and life, from the legalized abominations in the midst of which they have their home? Never did I feel the iniquity of the alcoholic traffic as I felt it at seeing this voluntary exile from the circles in which she was born to shine,—this living, but immolated victim, thus sacrificed on principle, and by law!

"'My mother desired me to say,' I added, 'that she has in her mind the plan for a Sunday-school in town, and wishes you to join her in it.'

"'I am glad to hear that your mother's thoughts take a direction so useful,' she replied; 'and shall be most happy to aid her as much as I can. But are not the people too much scattered?'

"'Yours is the only family,' said I, 'which is really

isolated; and my mother thought, if you could attend, others would be likely to.'

"'I know we are furthest from neighbors; but then we have good vehicles and safe horses. Mr. Durham, I know, will be delighted to aid me all in his power. Where does your mother propose to meet?'

"'At the Gore School-house; that is the most central.'

"'But when does she begin?'

"'Next Sabbath she proposes to meet you and a few others to arrange matters.'

"'Very well,—I will be there,' she added; when I thanked her, and turned to go.

"'No, don't leave yet; walk with me into the garden.'

"I did so, and was delighted with the scene of beauty which it presented. Mrs. Durham had brought with her the plants of an amply furnished green-house, to which she had added a great variety of flowering annuals, and almost all the wild-flowers of the country. She led me round among them, and called my attention to their varied beauties. Here the primrose spread its open petals to the light; there the variegated japonica, with a delightful blending of red and white, exulted in its gaudy attire. Here the *alba plus*, with its large flower of virgin whiteness, nature's token of purity and innocence, seemed a direct offshoot of the plants which bloomed under the hand of a sinless Eve; there the *japonicus elegans* lifted its lofty branches on high, all clothed in scarlet and gold. Here the ranunculus revealed its incarnations, with various hues of loveliness; there the *calla Ethiopica*, the verbena, and numerous varieties of the cactus, the geranium and the rose; and an assemblage of beauties, indigenous and exotic, too great to be particularized, added its own peculiar form of enchantment to the transporting scene. Her

husband had begun a plain but convenient receptacle for those among them that could not endure the winter, where his wife might still enjoy her plants and her flowers during these lonely months of her exile and her solitude. He appeared to have been the more careful to provide for her these means of alleviation, from a consciousness that he was the cause of her banishment."

CHAPTER V.

A TOWN WITHOUT ALCOHOL.

"When fierce Temptation, seconded within
By traitor Appetite, and armed with darts
Tempered in hell, invades the throbbing breast,
To combat may be glorious, and success
Perhaps may crown us; but to fly is safer."— COWPER.

MR. DURHAM'S farm was surrounded by lands held by distant owners who would not sell, which accounts for the extreme isolation in which his family lived. They had not a neighbor within two miles. Their experience, after leaving the groggery, was not unlike that of the Douglasses, except that the temper of Durham himself was never moody, but always cheerful and buoyant. He had so far recovered from the effects of the poison by noon as to manage his own team, and entered into free conversation with his wife on the events of the preceding night. He said, "Will you believe me, dearest, that I entered the miserable place with a fixed resolution that I would not taste a drop?"

"Why, then, Charles, did you not keep it?"

"Because the smell of brandy produced a total oblivion

of the motives to keep it. The associations revived by meeting my old friend also had their effect."

"An oblivion of the motives to virtue, Charles,—that is it. It is the only explanation of what I have seen in you over and over again. I cannot understand it. How could it be so, if you really loved me and your children? How could you do what you know disgraces us, and makes us miserable?"

"Think not, my dearest Amelia, that it is a want of love to you and our little ones. No; I love you as I do my own soul,—I could die for you. I do verily believe that if a loaded pistol were pointed at me, and I knew that the first drop I tasted would discharge its contents into my heart, it would be no restraint, in that state of mind, to my drinking. I should be so exclusively absorbed by my appetite, and the means of its gratification, as not to regard my own life more than I regard you and the children. Nothing but a physical impossibility, my dear Amelia, can keep me from drinking. I am convinced of this, and rejoice more than I can express that we are at length in these woods, so many miles from the temptation."

"Well, Charles, I rejoice too. The sacrifice of friendship and society is nothing compared with the pleasure of feeling that you are free from the fetters which have so long held you. I can work. I will do all in my power to help you cultivate the farm. We can do it, Charles,—we can do it. We can be virtuous and happy. Yes, yes, we shall be,—I know we shall be; and that reconciles me to the loss of father, mother, brother, sister, yea, all the dear associates of my youth;" and, as she said it, her eyes paid the tribute of tears to her conjugal devotion.

"We shall not be safe, Amelia, if the serpent enters our

Eden. I blush to confess, what I know is true, that I cannot be trusted with the enemy in town. My nature has no security on this point. 'Lead me not into temptation' is a prayer which can never be answered with the destroyer near me. I am not proof against the temptation."

"I know it, Charles, and I will raise the cry of murder against the man who introduces it. Making or vending the poison by the glass or by the pipe is just as fatal to us, and our children, as the assassin's dagger. Better kill us outright, than doom us to this disgraceful, protracted, tormenting death."

Thus they whiled away the hours of their ride, till at length they reached the cottage, which had been built for their reception by a faithful laborer, who had been sent on several months in advance of them. It was of logs, hewed only on the inside, with a large room for the family, and two contiguous ones for sleeping apartments. Above, also, was a provision for lodging laborers and servants, though their purpose was to live within themselves as much as possible. Mrs. Durham had resolved to be her own servant, and her husband his own farmer, except so far as clearing the land was concerned; which could be done by the job, without increasing their own family. It was a hard task for persons bred in the lap of luxury and fashion; but the security of being in a town without alcohol more than compensated for the trouble. It was not till several years after this that the enemy stole in upon them, to deface the fair form of virgin nature. Till then, all was prosperous. The population grew with unprecedented rapidity. "The period decreed by fate" had arrived now first from the world's foundation for man to "subdue and replenish" this uncultivated wild. Men seemed to drop down from the clouds, and every farm of fifty or a hun-

dred acres found a family to cultivate it. Axe resounded to axe, crash to crash of falling trees, and horn to horn, calling the weary woodmen to their frugal meal. O, woodman's axe! in what family escutcheon on our wide continent hast thou not earned the first place? The soul of poetry is in the sheen of thy labor-polished face. Thou art the harbinger of civilization, from Labrador to Mexico, and from the Atlantic to California. Relic of rural life! thy voice falls more sweetly on my ear than lute or harp. Thou art the memento of bold adventure, of hardy endurance, of rural virtue, of coarse fare, and of new-country life,—the incipient stages of that process which has given birth to a great nation!

The cottage of the Durhams stood by a clear running brook, which rippled and murmured among the stones as it passed, to lull to repose at night, and to form the interlude and undertone of the bird-song of the morning. It afforded, also, the more substantial advantage of sweet water for the use of the family. As it was seed-time when they arrived, Mrs. Durham neglected the arrangement of her furniture till she had sowed and planted her garden, of which we have already taken some notice. An acre of land contiguous to the house had been cleared of stumps and roots for the purpose, and was now prepared to receive the vegetable seeding and planting; and also the bulbous roots, roses and pinks, and all the greenhouse treasures, with which Mrs. Durham had come so amply furnished. The season was favorable, and the virgin soil soon shot forth its forms of life, beauty and usefulness, to bless the eye and gladden the heart of its charming cultivator. Flowers appeared in a few weeks, nor did they fail till nipped by the frosts of approaching winter; and then Mr. Durham's unpretending conservatory was prepared to perpetuate their bloom, in delightful contrast to the snow-clad,

tempest-stirring winter. Her dahlias were rich and beautiful beyond anything she had ever seen.

A fine field of growing wheat was already on the ground, to which Mr. Durham added corn, oats, potatoes, and whatever else seemed necessary to the subsistence or comfort of his family. Much of the time of Mrs. Durham was devoted to the instruction of her children, home education being now more a matter of necessity than of choice. Her little Amelia — the eldest — had all the fine points of her mother's character, added to the buoyancy and excellent temper of her father. Lydia, her sister, was more sedate, and, withal, apt to learn above children of her years. Little Charles, now only two years old, completed the group; and a happier is rarely met with, apart from the single danger from which they could never and nowhere feel themselves absolutely safe. Lifting up his hands over his breakfast-table one morning, Mr. Durham exclaimed, "Thank God! I have not a drop of the poison in my veins."

"Papa," said little Amelia, in her simplicity, "what makes us so much happier here than we used to be in our old home? It is not so pretty, and I thought we should be homesick."

"It is because our ways please God better, my child," replied her mother. "How does the Bible say it shall be with a man, when his ways please the Lord?"

"O! I remember," said Lydia; "I learned it in my lesson, last Sabbath: 'If a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.' We don't have any enemies now, do we, mamma?" added the child.

"What did you learn in your lesson, Milly?" said Mrs. Durham.

Milly's face fairly sparkled with smiles, as she repeated, "There is no want to them that fear Him."

"And it says, too," added Lydia, "'O, how great is thy goodness which thou hast provided for them that fear thee!'"

"That's a nice child!" said her father, clasping her fondly in his arms. "You do not forget your dear mamma's lessons!" — lessons which show what a constant resort she found necessary, in her loneliness, to the consoling promises of God's word. Still, they were a happy family. Joy and gladness presided at their board. Though shut out from the polite world, they were still happy in each other, and happy in their daily duties and labors. Mr. Durham read the Scriptures, morning and evening, in his family; but was too much impressed with the guilt of his past habits to admit of his going further, and acting as the priest of his own house. His wife did all she could to encourage him, and to induce him fully to commit himself before his family and the world to a religious life. But it was all to no purpose; for he felt, if he did not say, "How will praying appear in a drunkard?" This backwardness was a fault of his, indicating a secret reserve in behalf of temptation, in the event of its becoming strong, which may account in part for what follows. He ought not only to have passed over the river into a land of temperance and religion, but burnt the bridges behind him, and cut off the possibility of escape. The associations of a decidedly religious position, to say nothing of the help that it brings from above, are a source of security to which men of such propensities have the more need to resort. But he eschewed all such helps, and never rose above those motives to virtue which are derived from prudential considerations. Genuine piety to God did not enter into the list.

Still, both he and his old friend and present neighbor, Douglass, were active in establishing public worship in their town. Their wives, though five miles apart, felt themselves

near neighbors. Neighborhood, in a new country, comprehends a wider area than in more densely populated towns. Persons at twenty or thirty miles remove, often associate as neighbors. Mrs. Douglass and Mrs. Durham were much in each other's society. They projected together, with the advice of a few others, the plan of their contemplated Sunday-school, which became the nucleus of a church, and even of a renewed attention to general education in Mapleton. It first brought the children together on the Sabbath, then their parents, and finally Mr. Douglass volunteered his services in reading sermons to the assembled multitude. Few were more competent or expressive readers than he. Sometimes exhortations were given, and prayers offered, by those who had the confidence for such services. These were only occasional. The chief burden of giving interest to the gathering devolved upon Mrs. Douglass and her accomplished friend, whose sweetness of deportment, intelligence of conversation, and unaffected piety of heart, won for her not only the affections of the children, but the respect of their parents and of the whole town. They collected a well-stored juvenile library, which produced in almost every family a taste for reading, and thus contributed not a little to the elevation of the people. These ladies were the animating soul of the movement, — the Aaron and Hur to sustain its uplifted hands, and secure for it the public confidence. Mrs. Douglass, who was the senior of her friend by some years, and withal, as the daughter of a clergyman, much more experienced in such matters, was the priestess of the town. She was the ministering angel to the sick, and the lady confessor, so to speak, of the dying. She would say to her husband, who was always doubtful as to their doing any good to the people, "We shall win them

yet, there 's no doubt. No people are proof against kindness and sincerity."

"O, Mary!" he would say, "all are not like you. I wish in my soul they were; we should then have a happier world. You are a prodigy, in your way; you 'll do your part, there 's not a doubt."

"My dear George, you are very complimentary," she said; "but I do not think there is anything extraordinary in me. It is in my training. The same training would have made nine in ten of the people as good or better than I am. We do not consider how much we owe to circumstances; and what have we that we have not received?"

While things were thus in Mapleton, Providence kindly sent help to those who were so assiduous in helping themselves. A man removed to town by the name of James Littlefield,— not a preacher, but of a blameless life and exalted piety, and withal of very respectable gifts as a public speaker. He was poor in this world's goods; had a feeble wife, with three dependent children, whom he supported by day-labor, not having means to purchase land of his own. So great was his usefulness in conducting the public worship of the town, however, that the hearts of the people seemed to centre upon him as their pastor to visit their sick and bury their dead; and they not only contributed to his support from the products of their farms, but even made the first payment on a homestead for him, and put him in a way to pay the rest. It is natural to a community to desire some one to have a special care of their spiritual interests; and, when they have no regular minister, it is highly proper to select one from among themselves, in whom they may have confidence, to take this office and ministration upon him. Mr. Littlefield was a modest man, and used sometimes to say to Mrs. Douglass, "I

never rise to speak in public when my knees do not smite together like Belshazzar's."

"Let them smite," said Mrs. Douglass; "it can do no hurt, so long as your tongue does not forget its cunning, nor your heart to indite good matter. You have succeeded thus far beyond our hopes. I am no flatterer; but, in my sober judgment, Mr. Littlefield, you are more competent to teach this people religion than nine-tenths of our preachers, take them as they rise. I have no sympathy with those who measure the supply of laborers by the number of students in our seminaries. Meagre supply, indeed, and many of them quite inefficient, when you get them. You have more experience of the truth, though less professional mannerism; and all the better for that. You understand the people, and they understand you, because you are one of them. You touch their sympathies, and suit yourself to their habits of thinking. I always hated measuring off devotion by rule, as a merchant does his cloth. I cannot endure sermons addressed to the man in the moon, or to the people before the flood, or to a collection of imaginary savans, instead of talking to the living masses before you."

Mrs. Douglass was right. Her practical good sense looked intuitively into matters of fact. The people were won. They thronged the place of worship to hear the truth from Mr. Littlefield's lips. Mapleton had a Sabbath, priest, sanctuary, and ritual. It had a pastor, a library, an altar, and a Sunday-school. But, thank God! it had yet no groggery. The poison was not sold within its limits, nor to be met with in its families. The people were not all pious, it is true; but, in the absence of that universal agent of impiety and crime, they were decent, orderly, and respectful to the institutions of religion. Schools were established at convenient

places; and, though a new country, the children availed themselves with much avidity of the means of instruction, and became even more intelligent and better-behaved than in older and more favored towns.

There were, indeed, infidel families, and plenty of combustible material to kindle at the touch of one spark from the all-consuming alcoholic furnace. One groggery — one — would be enough to deface the fair aspect of things, and fill the town with devils. Among the number of the above description was a family by the name of Jollops. In a conversation with his venerable neighbor, Robson, old Mr. Jollops remarked, "I did hope I 'd got beyond the reach of this 'ere religion, when I came into the woods; but it pursues me like a terrier."

"Get beyond religion!" replied Robson. "Why not get beyond air and sunshine? Why not steal the march upon your own nature?"

"Fie on my natur!" said Jollops; "there 's no religion in 't more than juice in a husk. Sabbaths, meetings, preaching, and all sich, can't squeeze it into me, nor out on me, any way."

"Are you a brute? None but brutes are without religion. The trees, the birds, the clouds, the waterfalls, were here before the Douglasses, Durhams and Littlefields, and did far more to make us religious. The roar of the surf on the beach has more worship in it than all their psalmody."

"Yes, heathen; that 's what Littlefield calls it."

"Well, it 's good enough for me; and you 'd feel so too, if you had a soul in you as big as the point of a mosquitos' probe."

"O you 're a philosopher!" said Jollops, sneeringly. "Guess my soul 's as large as your untempered mosquitos' bills,— ha, ha, ha!" he added, alluding to a quaint theory of

Robson, that it took a young mosquito some time, after coming out of his watery womb, to get his bill hard enough to bite.

"Your skull is thick as an ass's!" said Robson.

"Yes, too thick for your worship of trees. You never go to meeting more than I. The woods and mosquitos are your organ, priest, and Bible. Well, I care not how much sich religion we have; it won't stick to one's conscience, more than water to a goose's back."

Thus the roots of vice and impiety were not dead, but only kept under by the absence of alcohol,— that bane of social order,— and by the predominance of another class of influences. The smothered embers of vice were not confined to a Douglass or a Durham, but were latent in many a constitution, by inheritance or by former indulgence; and nothing was necessary to make them flame up, with universal desolation, but the vent and occasions of temptation.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OUTPOSTS OF THE ENEMY AT LENGTH APPEAR.

"Wherever God erects a house of prayer,
The devil always builds a chapel there;
And 't will be found, upon examination,
The latter has the larger congregation."— DEFOE.

BY an accident, from which Charles escaped barely with life, three things opened upon him,— a little friend, a college course, and a Mapleton groggery. The first caused pleasure, the second labor, and the third ruin. Such are the ingredients

of which the cup of life is compounded, -- pleasure, labor, ruin. The circumstances which led to the accident we will detail in his own words; as who knows better than one's self his boyhood's experiences?

"As to myself," he says, "I must confess to a foolish feeling of mortification, that my mother's exertions and my father's sermon-reading gave our family a sort of clerical reputation in town. Perhaps the secret of it might be, in part, the incongruity of my father's previous habits with his present position. True, his Mapleton reputation was untarnished, and his affairs prosperous; but my mother and I knew we were building on a volcano. The smothered embers of his former vice needed only the contact of a groggery to flame up for the ruin of his family, and make him in the same degree odious as he now enjoyed honor as a virtuous and useful citizen. The experiment of new-country farming, so far, succeeded beyond our hopes. We harvested fifty acres of wheat the summer after our arrival, as the fruits of a former seeding; and we got in one hundred acres the same autumn. The price of wheat was high, and our income far exceeded our expenses. Our neighbor Durham did as well accordingly, but had not an equal amount of land or labor.

"My heart bleeds at the pangs of fear with which my poor mother was afflicted, from her sense of the danger to which prosperity would expose my father. She knew that the more easy his circumstances, the more likely he would be to drink, in case any strong temptation came in his way. Our very success seemed to her a lure to destruction. I was her eldest child, and the only person in town, except Mrs. Durham, to whom she intrusted her thoughts. With tears in her eyes, she said, 'Charles, my son, we must not flatter

ourselves; we have no security. Next year, or even next month, may plunge us into the abyss. There is no hope that this wicked traffic, protected as it is by law, and licensed by the state, will not find its way into a town becoming thus populous and wealthy. We are building over a magazine of powder, and men are encouraged by legislation to set it on fire and blow us all to ruin. There is more safety in a battle-field. Yes, Charles; much as I hate war, I should feel more secure if we were all soldiers drawn up in line of battle than with this alcoholic traffic among us.'

"'Mother,' I replied, 'is your piety no security?'

"'Yes, my son; if it is sincere, it may support me under this trial of trials; but it has no power over your father's infirmity.'

"'What! is there nothing we can do to secure him? Can we not prevent the introduction of the traffic, by timely remonstrance?'

"'This is more than I expect,—an example without a precedent in our state. Here is an open field, where money may be made by selling intoxicating drinks; and somebody's cupidity must, sooner or later, discover and supply the market.'

"'But perhaps father has seen the evil of drinking so much as to resist the temptation.'

"'Had you seen what I have, my son, you would not think so. There are tens of thousands, who have as many inducements to temperance as he has, ruining their families by drinking. Besides, he has never yet been exposed to a strong temptation, when he did not fall. He thinks he will not, before-hand, but he always does. There is no hope, with the traffic among us.'

"'What can be done? Must we stand still and perish?'

"'My advice is that you leave soon for college. You are now fitted for an advanced standing. You may thus turn our present prosperity to the advantage of completing your education, before adversity comes to defeat the hope of your life. Better that our surplus means should go so, than to be on hand to be wasted by and by.'

"I did not, at the time, realize our danger to the same extent that my mother did. I only thought father had better let *preaching* alone, and take more to *practice*. I agreed with our neighbor Robson, that the religion of nature was enough. I could not see why there should be so much effort to cultivate a plant that grows spontaneously. At all events, I had so much apprehension in reference to my father's habits, that I felt a decided repugnance to his having any very conspicuous share in the religious worship of our town. I suppose it was foolish of me, but I could not help it as I then felt.

"While things were thus situated, it happened, on a quiet Sabbath morning, that I was awakened at dawn by the robins and blue-birds warbling their matin song in the pendent branches around our house. I listened for a time in a dreamy state between sleeping and waking. My mind was the home of beauty. I lived over a paradisiacal life. I thought of the Fauns, and Naiads, and Nymphs, with which a Grecian imagination had peopled earth and ocean. Passing droves of deer, just escaped from their mossy couches, flitted before my view. Instead of robins and blue-birds alone, I fancied that all the birds of song, in the glory of their variegated plumage, were serenading me; and a dreamy conceit invested them with intelligence, as if happy spirits from a higher world were filling my soul with their more heavenly beauty and melody. I shouted in an ecstasy of delight, and the effort

roused me to consciousness. I arose and looked out of the bay-window, to survey the lake scenery. It had put on more than its usual charms. It reposed before me sublimely calm, as if conscious of its own dignity. 'The East had decked herself in orient pearl and gold.' Sublime and beautiful as the morning is in every other clime, it has here unusual elements of loveliness. Whether from the nature of the exhalations, the conflict of aërial currents, or other causes, it is a fact of general observation, that the sŏlar rays, as they approximate the horizontal plane, both in rising and setting, produce, in this our new home, extraordinary combinations of beauty. Their reflection from the lake, on this occasion, lent enchantment to my mind. Painted clouds and over-hanging forests, reflected from the quiet water, whose smooth surface, here and there variegated with gentle ripples from light flaws of air, like etchings on polished steel, altogether produced a scene of loveliness to attract and entrance minds far less susceptible than my own. How touching, how truthful, how eloquent, are nature's appeals to the senses of man! Who, that should once inhale the pure vapors of such a morning, could breathe again the infected haunts of riot and dissipation? Who can turn away from the pure fountains of joy and blessedness, which God has opened in this sweet land, to those stimulating potions from which vice derives its maddening inspiration?

"My heart overflowed with the delightful associations of such a morning. My dream was reality. Angels did, indeed, nestle in the rosy clouds on which I was gazing. The Æolian breezes whispered in my ear notes from their lyres. In the height of this ecstatic feeling the bark of our dog, 'Watch,' broke upon my ear. 'Watch never barks like this,' said I to myself, 'when a deer is not in pursuit. Watch

will have him, for he never gives over.' Watch was a Bucephalus among dogs, and equally deserving with that famed steed of immortality. His spotted coat and noble form had a charm to my eye which those will appreciate who know what it is to love a dog. His bark was shrill as a silver trumpet, clear and distinct as a vesper-bell, and was never heard without touching my soul with fire to engage with him in his favorite pursuit of the bounding deer. In an instant, I passed from angelic communion to the fellowship of brutes and the *furor* of the chase. I bounded from my room like an arrow, and ran to a cove a mile east of my father's, where I stood listening to the baying of a hundred dogs, who had by this time joined the pursuit.

> 'Yelled on the view the opening pack,—
> Rock, glen and cavern, paid them back;
> To many a mingled sound at once
> The awakened forest gave response.'

"The deer, as usual, sought the lake, to escape the dogs by swimming. Canaudeh, my nocturnal acquaintance, met him at the pass (as a certain part of a hunting-ground is called), where he snapped his rifle, missed fire, and away flew the buck like a thing of air.

"I stood for a moment, when the noble denizen of the forest, with great branching horns, swept past me and plunged into the lake. I sprang to the beach, crying out, at the top of my voice, 'A deer, a deer!' Canaudeh soon appeared, and, taking me into his canoe, we renewed the chase on the lake. I reclined in the bow with *withe* in hand, as the instrument to take the deer with was called. It was made of a long, tough sapling, trimmed of all its branches except the two principal ones, which were twisted together at the ends so as to form a loop of sufficient capacity to go over the

head of the animal, and hold him tight, being fastened round his neck. We soon came up with the poor deer, whose powerful sinews propelled him with such force that nearly half his body was driven above the surface of the water, the surf rolling from him either way, his mouth open, his tongue protruding, his saliva foaming, and his desperation so great that I fancied he became suddenly transmuted into a warlike Turk, with his sabre in hand, who was in the act of striking me dead on the spot. O! dying, dying, what is dying? Here my thoughts tapered off to nothing, like the expiring vibrations of a smitten bell, and I remembered no more."

The effervescing soul had sunk to rest. The over-strained harp-strings had snapped, and gave no further vibration. The instant that Charles put his withe over the head of the deer, the poor animal uttered a plaintive bleat, like a death-knell, and, driven to desperation, turned, and brought the sharp hoof of his fore-foot down upon the boy, with such force as to lay his skull bare, and knock him senseless to the bottom of the canoe. With tender solicitude, Canaudeh now betook himself to the care of his unconscious charge. He folded him in his arms with the tenderness of a mother, blew in his mouth, wet his temples; but all to no purpose. Charles lay pale and flaccid in his bosom. The savage had by this time experienced much kindness from the Douglasses; and for Charles, in particular, he seemed to have a special liking. Failing in all his efforts, he paddled his canoe to the shore; and there he was met by a beautiful little girl, who, from the distance, had gazed upon the scene with rapt attention. As soon as she saw Charles lying in the canoe, as if dead, she exclaimed, with a sweet voice, "O, father, father! do come! do, do, do!" at the same time running back into the thicket, from which, after a short time, she returned, leading her

father by the hand. Mr. Harcourt — for such was the name of this gentleman — was equally moved with his little daughter.

Having used upon the boy all his means of restoration, he took him to his own house, which was near, assisted by the Indian, and despatched a messenger for medical aid. Meanwhile, he put Charles into a warm bath, and then transferred him to his bed; and, after applying pungent stimulants to his person, the signs of animation began to appear. At the instant the boy opened his eyes, his father and mother entered the room, and, seeing them, he said,

"Father, where am I?"

"You are here, in the house of this good friend, my son," said his father, with an emotion of surprise at finding him alive, as their worst fears had been excited.

"Where have I been?" said Charles.

"You can answer that question better than I," replied his father. "You have not been with us, or this accident would not have happened."

"O, I remember," said Charles. "Where is Canaudeh?"

The old savage uttered guttural sounds, which seemed to say how glad he was to see him alive.

"And the deer,— where is the deer?" inquired Charles.

"Alas, my son!" said Mrs. Douglass, "we have nothing of the deer but this wound on your head."

"Wound on my head?" said Charles, putting up his hand, when he found, for the first time, that his head was bandaged, and had been bleeding. "And this is Sunday, too," he added, thoughtfully.

"Yes, this is Sunday," said his mother; "and the chase is the last place where I should have looked for my Charles."

"I had thought as much myself," he said, evidently humbled at this abuse of a day which he had been religiously trained to observe.

"Yes, my son," said his mother; "and we had thought your death must be added to the list of Sabbath-day accidents. We cannot be too thankful that our fears are not realized."

Father, mother and son, were all much affected.

"O, how happy we all are, Charles, that you have come back from heaven! Did you see my blessed mother there?" said little Sarah, with genuine childish simplicity.

This was the first view Charles had of her; and he was so moved by her angelic sweetness and beauty, that, in his confusion, he fancied her, for a moment, a spirit from a higher world.

"Your mother is in heaven, my sweet girl?" he said, not comprehending her meaning.

"Yes; my blessed mother went to heaven more than a year ago; and I want some one to come from there, to bring me a kiss."

"Dear child," said Charles, "I am not fit to go to heaven. I am a sinner. How could I go to heaven, to bring you a kiss?"

"Sarah, my love," said Mr. Harcourt, "do not trouble him."

"No trouble at all, sir," said Charles, holding her hand gently in his.

Watch now drew near the bed, with ears drooping, as if partaking in the general affliction. Charles patted him on the head, and he shook his tail with so much force as to sway his body to and fro, thus expressing, as well as he could, how happy he was that matters were no worse.

The medical gentleman now arrived, and made such prescriptions as the nature of the case seemed to demand. The name of this gentleman was Holliston, a man trained to two professions, the medical and clerical, the latter of which he had exercised over one of the largest New England congregations, till his voice failed, when he resumed again the practice of medicine. He had lately arrived in town, in company with his children, who had found it for their interest to emigrate. He hoped to make himself still useful among a people more needing, though less able to compensate, his services. His dignified person and fine countenance were an index of the noble sentiments which had actuated him through life. He took his leave, with an engagement to meet at dinner, the next day, some of his former acquaintances, whom Mr. Harcourt was expecting in town. Indeed, this gentleman had long known the doctor, and they had come to town in company; which accounts for his being called, rather than physicians who had been longer established.

Great preparations were going on in the family for this dinner. John, the servant, was collecting from earth, air and water, whatever might minister to appetite or to pleasure. Mr. Harcourt was bred a free liver, and had transferred to the new country habits and means of luxury unknown to most of its inhabitants. Dinner was the great event of the day, towards which the skill and resources of the house flowed, without stint or measure. He never left his table without swallowing his bottle of claret, with such occasional additions of brandy, Scotch whiskey, or other wines, during the day and evening, as appetite seemed to demand. Still, Mr. Harcourt was never intoxicated, as that term is generally understood. He abhorred the thing more than most men. He thought it beastly and degrading. Mrs.

Douglass, mistrusting the habits of the family, took measures to keep her husband away by staying away herself, intrusting Charles to the care of little Sarah's nurse till he should be able to come home. Mr. Holliston came early the next day to look after his patient, in whom he seemed to take a peculiar interest.

"My lad," said he, "it is time you were looking out for something besides deer and foxes. Have you studied Latin yet?"

"A little," replied Charles.

"And Greek?"

"Yes, Greek too."

"And mathematics?"

"My mother, sir, thinks me prepared to enter college."

"Ay, ay; your mother, eh? what does she know about it?"

"She is a classical scholar, sir, and has assisted me in my studies."

"Quite unusual,—quite, quite. Where was your mother brought up?"

"In New England, sir. Her father was many years the clergyman of Paucatuck parish, who had a great desire for a son, to try his peculiar notions of education upon; but, disappointed in this, he experimented with my mother, giving her an education equal, I judge, to an ordinary college course."

"Old Pastor Rogers,— was that his name?"

"Yes,— Lebbeus Rogers."

"In Paucatuck parish. Yes, yes; I knew him well. Eccentric, original, but a right-down good man, and gentleman of the old school. Was your mother Pastor Rogers' daughter, eh?"

"Yes, sir; his only child."

"Well, my lad, you must step into the place of your

grandfather's hoped-for son, and do his work to another generation. What is there to prevent your going to college this autumn?"

"I cannot say, sir, whether my father will feel himself able to sustain the burden."

"Never mind that. I can put you on a foundation. I'd rather pay all the bills than not have old Pastor Rogers' son educated. Diddington College has a foundation for such smart lads as you, of which I am a trustee. We'll see; we'll see. Diddington is just the place for you. How is your head, my boy?"

"It is much relieved."

"Sleep well?"

"Pretty well. Started some, and had frightful dreams, the first of the night, but got quiet before morning."

"All that is quite natural; quite,— very."

Physician and patient were now interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Harcourt, accompanied by Skampton and Marldon.

"Glad to meet you in the new country, at last," said Marldon to his host; "you have had a long siege in getting here."

"Yes, confounded long," said Harcourt. "You lawyers, bailiffs, creditors, the devil and all, had liked to detain me forever; but, thank my stars, I escaped at last with a whole skin."

"'All's well that ends well,'" said Marldon. "The large deduction wrung out of your creditors ought to satisfy you. Have you built yet?"

"No, not done. The work is going on. We have pitched into this cabin the mean while, for the want of a better."

"A competence is left you, eh?" said Marldon, with a

chuckle at his own skill in fleecing creditors and enriching client.

"Nothing to complain of," said Harcourt. "It's my treat, I confess. John, bring on that old hock," he added, calling to his man. "A drop from my grandfather's cellar is as good to sharpen appetite as to clear the throat after dinner."

"From your grandfather's cellar, and not in your assets?" added the lawyer, with another chuckle.

"Yes; better be hung than lose one's wine. Here, John, extract that cork. That's right, man. Now for a glass of this blessed old Rhenish, which is twenty-five years older than any man in the company," said Harcourt, holding up the bottle, and pouring the imprisoned enemy into a glass, all sparkling and flaming with death. They drank, and offered the cup to the doctor.

"I am a teetotaller, gentlemen," said the doctor; "don't ask me to drink. I do not drink, on principle."

"I never drink, *on inclination*," said Skampton; "I'm none of your new-fangled principle men, who are wiser than the Son of God himself, who both made wine and treated his friends with it."

"What! you not drink, Mr. Skampton," said Harcourt, "and make your thousands out of drinking?"

"And loses his thousands, too, out of drinking," said Marldon. "Is it true, my friend, that a drunken crew have sunk a ship for you among the whales of Kamtschatka?"

"They have sunk my ship, but not my funds. I was insured."

"The whole amount?" said Marldon.

"More than I should have got in these times of light cargoes and small pay."

"Were the drunkards who went down insured?" inquired Harcourt, laughing.

"That is another thing," replied Mr. Holliston. "The insurance offices cannot restore the poor fellows their lost life. They cannot repair the damage to widows and orphans."

"The disasters of the sea are unavoidable," said Skampton.

"Those of rum are greater," rejoined the doctor.

"I hope you do not blame ship-owners, because sailors will get drunk," said Skampton.

"I do blame them for furnishing the means," said the doctor. "It is as sure death to them as weapons in the hands of madmen. We have no right to put the cup to our neighbor's lip. Ship-owners sink their own property, and the sailors, too, by furnishing them strong drink."

"Not their own property, if they are insured," said Marldon.

"Profits must be charged on what is saved, to cover the loss, where there is no insurance," said Harcourt.

"No doubt losses raise the price of the article lost, when they are very heavy," said Skampton.

"The loss must fall somewhere," said Mr. Holliston. "Besides, it is not a simple question of loss and gain. Ship-owners are morally bound to watch over the life and health of the sailors they employ; and they cannot do it where intoxicating drinks are put into their hands. They will drink, if we give them the means; and we are bound, in conscience and in humanity, not to do it. We are accessory to their death, by doing it."

"That 's perfectly preposterous!" said Skampton. "Must

ships be sailed without ropes, because a crazy sailor, now and then, hangs himself?"

"Ropes do not make sailors crazy, but alcohol does," said Mr. Holliston. "Ropes do not create an appetite for hanging; but alcohol creates an appetite which is ungovernable, and which, when indulged, sinks ships, drowns sailors, burns houses, raises mobs, multiplies crime, and produces more plagues than escaped from Pandora's box. How can you, then, with the knowledge of these facts, do anything to provoke or gratify such an appetite, without involving yourself in the guilt of wholesale murder?"

"This old doctor is rowing against wind and tide," whispered Marldon to his host, as they discussed a bottle of wine together. "Skampton 's death upon teetotalism."

"A great benefactor, too!" said Harcourt, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"He knows how to get, as well as give; and to give, too, where it will bring a dividend in reputation, if not in money," said Marldon.

"That 's it, that 's it!" said Harcourt; "I 've always said charity is keen for dividends. She is a great sharper, the painted old jade!"

"Thank God, doctor, my conscience is not in your keeping!" said Mr. Skampton, at the same time jumping up, and beginning to pace the floor.

Dinner was now announced, and served with all the sumptuousness of bankrupt opulence. They sat an hour over their fruits and wines, some partaking of one, and others of both, till Bacchus reigned supreme with his votaries. In the midst of the good cheer, Skampton was waited on by his land factor, a young man of a searching, sinister aspect, who was the leader of a singular gang in town, that went under the

name of money-diggers. His name was Samuel Gilfort, and he was an alcoholic necromancer. His father was so before him, but never turned his peculiar powers to any worldly advantage, having always lived in extreme poverty; whereas the son was a man ever on the alert for the main chance, looking out for something to turn up which would raise him in the world. His vigilance in this respect had brought him into contact with the great land-holder, while his shrewdness had commended him to Skampton as a suitable instrument to be used.

"Draw up, Gilfort, draw up," said Harcourt, "and take a glass of this old Madeira. It 's capital; 't will whet your faculties in this business of land-hunting."

Gilfort gladly obeyed the summons, and swallowed glass after glass, till full half a bottle of the infernal nectar was leaping and dancing among his veins and arteries. His eye dilated; he was collected in mind; his perceptive powers were whetted to their keenest edge. Not a trace of ordinary intoxication appeared in him, but he had more the aspect of a man who felt the spell of inspiration, and the afflatus of a seer. He was one of those on whom alcohol acts as the *pharmacia* of the ancients, or those drugs used as charms, love-potions, or to produce the sibylline frenzy by which events were foretold, and a sublimated state of the faculties was produced.

"Well, Gilfort," said Skampton, "how goes it? Have you located?"

"Yes, I foresee a grand turn-up from the hit I have made. The warrants marked A, B, C, D. I have located round the Falls,— a water-power to turn any quantity of machinery, and which is sure to turn up a great city as time is to unroll his scroll. A hundred acre lot, including the Falls, is already taken up, and has some small betterments on 't; but I have

bargained for it at a moderate advance, on condition of your approval. The rest all comes at government price, though worth at this moment a thousand times its cost. We shall thus have, in a body around the Falls, six hundred acres, including a water-power which cannot fail to give birth to a city. But, should that fail,—which is impossible, or I am no prophet,—we have as good land for farming as can be got, besides the water-fall. All agree it 's a magnificent purchase."

"Good! A brave fellow! Keen, real keen, Gilfort,—we 'll make a speck, I think. At any rate, our chance is between well and a windfall."

"It 'll prove the stepping-stone, I trust, to a long-cherished hope of doing somewhat for this crazy world," said Gilfort, with an eye dilating with hope, and a mind laboring with great ideas, such as they were, produced by the blending of the alcoholic current with a peculiar constitutional necromancy.

"Crazy! crazy!" said Harcourt to Marldon, in an undertone. "He transfers his own craziness to the rest of mankind. He 's mad as a March hare!"

"Yes, he believes the earth is full of ingots of gold, I learn, buried there by the dead generations," said Marldon. "He 's a great digger; but he 'll find a heavier chest in his transactions with Skampton, I guess, than any that the earth contains."

"He takes a share, then?"

"Yes, a quarter; and if his purchase turns out what it seems, it 'll bring him thousands. Always in luck," added Marldon, addressing Skampton. "Have you secured the Gore lot, yet?"

"It is secured, sir, and the building is contracted for," replied Skampton. "It 's a first-rate stand."

"Stand for what?" inquired Charles, turning on his sofa, with an anxious, excited look.

"A tavern-stand, child," replied Skampton; "what else d' ye think?"

"O, God, have mercy on us!" exclaimed Charles, involuntarily.

"Do you feel worse, my son?" said the doctor, not comprehending what had been said.

"Not in body," replied Charles.

"In mind, then?" inquired the kind physician.

"To be honest, I have a horror of a groggery in our quiet town," replied the boy.

"And so have I," said the physician. "We can't have one,— we must not have one."

"You do me wrong, my lad, to speak thus of my benevolent exertions in behalf of strangers passing through your town. Is a traveller's home a groggery?" said Skampton, with aggrieved feelings at the imputation.

"What are travellers' homes, as a general thing, but groggeries?" said Mr. Holliston. "The boy did right to call it by the name it deserves. Will you obligate yourself not to sell intoxicating drinks on the Gore lot?"

"I never sell them," said Skampton.

"Well, will you prevent their sale by the terms of your lease?"

"I shall impose no restrictions. I shall leave my tenant to consult his own interest. Would you have me proscribe beef-steak?"

"That's right!" said Marldon; "I'd be bound by none of these new measures. If people make fools of *themselves*, must *you?* Keeping rum, or beef-steak, compels nobody

to buy. And those who wish to buy will have it, whether you keep it, or not. That 's my logic."

"The more they buy, the jollier, as saith an old ballad," said Harcourt, beginning to sing,—

"See! the rain soaks to the skin;
Make it rain as well within.
Wine, my boy! we 'll sing and laugh;
All night revel, rant and quaff,—
Till the morn, stealing behind us,
At the table sleep will find us."

"Drinking will civilize these Mapleton dolts. From drunken old Noah's day to this time, wine has been the inspiration of generous souls."

Remonstrance was vain, and Mr. Holliston dropped the subject. Indeed, his being found in such society was owing to his acquaintance with these gentlemen when they were not what they had now become, and in a new country he was naturally attracted to them by the lack of society and the ties of recollection. As for Skampton, a morbid conservatism, which clings to whatever is old and abhors whatever is new, united to an overweening desire for money, with which to buy influence and reputation, was the root from which branched off most of the evils of his character. Poor Charles had no more rest. The wounds of his mind were deeper and more dangerous than those of his body. His imagination revelled amid scenes of domestic madness and murder. And when the facts were imparted to his mother, she was still more agonized. The Gore lot was the centre of attraction to the town, and they had everything to apprehend from its being made the seat of a traffic in alcohol. Their place of worship joined it; and now, to have it a Satan's seat, was too abhorrent,— too alarming to their domestic fears.

The few days that Charles staid in the Harcourt family had one charm which never faded from his mind, and that was his acquaintance with little Sarah. It was the fairy dream of a desolate night. To his ear the voice of Sarah was sweeter than lute or harp, and her form seemed too sylph-like and ethereal for a land of rugged realities. He was surprised, also, at the order and elegance which reigned around. The costly carpets, rich drapery, gorgeous furniture and well-appointed domestics,— relics of faded splendor, — contrasted strangely with the wild surroundings of new-country life. Mr. Harcourt he saw not after the day of this convivial dinner; but Sarah was always present, watching him like a guardian angel, and amusing him with her guitar. On one occasion she sang, with great pathos, a little piece taught her by her governess, which perfectly entranced him:

Gentle mother, what is here
Now my aching heart to cheer?
Since you left me, all is sad,—
What can ever make me glad?

Let the blue-bird sing his lay;
Let the robin greet the day
With his notes so pure and clear,
Can *I* sing, a lone one here?

On the cheek of me, your child,
Singing now my strain so wild,
May I feel thy gentle kiss,
Foretaste of serener bliss!

One sweet word from thee above,
From the land of perfect love,
Sweeter far to me would be
Than earth's softest melody.

Now I shed a burning tear,
That no voice from thee I hear;
Oft I call, and call again,
But the stillness gives me pain.

Why not speak, my mother mild?
Lov'st thou not thine orphan child?
Have my woes no power to touch
Thee, who loved me once so much?

"Sarah, you sing like an angel," said Charles, in a transport.

"Did you ever hear the angels sing?" she inquired, with great simplicity.

"No, Sarah; but I 'm sure their music cannot be sweeter than yours."

"What! did you hear no music in heaven?" she inquired, still possessed of the idea that, as he seemed like her dead mother, he must have been in heaven. Here the governess interposed, and before the conversation could be resumed Charles was removed to his father's house.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ENEMY ENTERS AT LAST.

"Every inordinate cup is unblessed, and the ingredient is a — devil."
SHAKSPEARE.

"And when, alas! our brains are gone,
What nobler substitute than wine?" — BYRON.

As soon as Charles was able, Mr. Holliston took him home, and had an interview with his parents on the subject of his

entering college. He engaged his tuition out of the funds of which he was a trustee, and more, if necessary; but Mr. and Mrs. Douglass were unwilling that he should depend upon charity. Still, as it would be a matter of convenience to have an advance of his tuition fees till they should find it convenient to refund the amount, they accepted it. They found occasion for all their funds in subduing a new farm, and hoped that when that crisis was passed, they would be easier in their circumstances. The ensuing October was fixed upon for Charles to leave, the interval being devoted to preparation. His own thoughts now took a more serious turn, and he began to have earnest views of life. He felt for himself, a creature of impulse as he was, and liable above most to temptation; he felt for his mother; and they both felt for his father, as none but the friends of an unfortunate victim of intemperance know how to feel.

Days and weeks together, before Charles was old enough to realize their condition, Mrs. Douglass had spent in constant apprehension for her own life and that of her children. The effect of alcohol upon her husband was not stupor and imbecility, but madness of the most terrific kind, accompanied by unwonted muscular power. It was only after he was exhausted by over-exertion that he became weak and unconscious. Hence, the question of his returning to his cups was one of life or death to the whole household. Even his years of abstinence were years of constant apprehension. If he was delayed beyond the expected time, or was out late at night, Mrs. Douglass, and Charles, when he was old enough to realize the danger, would sit watching and sleepless, to secure themselves and the other children against a murderous assault, in case of his returning intoxicated. The torments of such a family God only knows. O, could the dealer in intoxicating

drinks realize what they suffer, his gains would burn on his conscience like the fire of the pit! Their security for the few previous years was owing to Mr. Douglass' remove from the poison. He was not a man to go far out of his way to get it, especially after his attack of delirium tremens; but when it fell in his way he invariably lost the command of himself.

The fact that a groggery was now building in town, and soon to be opened, filled them with alarm. Charles remonstrated against leaving home at a time of such peril; but his mother insisted that it was the only time to complete his education, and that the family would be quite as safe without as with him. Their farm-laborers would have to be called in on an emergency, as neither Charles nor any of the family could control the paroxysms of violence to which Mr. Douglass was subject when he was intoxicated. It would simply cost them the sacrifice of Charles' society, to which they must, in any event, sooner or later submit. These considerations produced on all sides a general acquiescence in the immediate separation. Still, Charles' sensibility on the occasion was intense. His was a nature to feel keenly what it felt at all. But it proved a mental disturbance, like the evening shades distilling dew, to overspread his character with a genial influence. It led him to prayer, in his own behalf and that of his family. It made him watchful of himself, tender to his parents, brothers and sisters, and altogether earnest to fulfil the hopes which centred in him.

He was much in the society of Mr. Littlefield, and received from that good man instruction which he deemed of the utmost value to his subsequent career. "I began now to think of God in good earnest," he says, in a paper now before us; "I never conceived Him so near before. My thoughts of Him increased with the intensity of my emotions, ending in self-

condemnation at the contrast of my character to His. I could find no peace till I had a sense of pardoning mercy and atoning love. I owed much to that good man, Mr. Littlefield. He taught me the freeness and fulness of divine mercy, in a way to make me take hold on them. He showed me how unspeakably willing God is to pardon sinners on a simple act of faith in Christ; how unnecessary it is to torture one's self with a sense of guilt, as if that would make amends or give to God a ransom; and, by the clearness of the views which he presented of the finished redemption which already exists for us in Christ, I was filled with all joy and peace in believing. Argument upon argument, in confirmation of God's love to me, now flowed in upon my mind, like a sweet stream of heavenly light, from every page of divine revelation, from all the objects of nature, from the whole course of Providence, filling me with the sweetness of a delightful surprise. I wept for joy. I now had repose of mind in reference to father, mother, brothers, sisters, and all my interests; assured that, in the final consummation of things, He would bestow upon us all a portion with which we should see infinite reasons to be satisfied. I saw, I felt, that God's policy is to rear the best characters by the severest trials, and to punish the worst by the very greatness of their prosperity: 'The prosperity of fools destroys them.'"

October at length came, and Charles launched his bark upon the open sea of life. Tears were shed on all sides, but they were tears radiant with hope. The mother committed her son to the voyage of life with vows and prayers which were the guarantee of his safety. The father poured forth his stricken heart into the bosom of his son, and gave him a blessing, with the gloomy foreboding that it might never return upon his own head. Alas! the feelings of *such* a

father, who can imagine? The children felt the gloom of this first breach in their circle, and mingled their desires with those of father and mother, that dear Charles might be prosperous and happy. Even Watch seemed to whine with a melancholy sympathy on the occasion, and retired to his kennel in sullen despondency. The laborers on the farm felt that the animating soul of their circle was gone. And, as Charles himself whirred through the yielding air, amid the clatter and rough breathing of the flying locomotive, surrounded by living masses with whom he had no sympathy, he found his only consolation in looking up, and committing his ways to that beneficent Power who has an eye to pity and a hand to save.

Three months after Charles left were the Christmas holidays, when the Mapleton groggery was dedicated to Bacchus; when all the town, not too young, nor too old, nor too pious, nor too stringent in their temperance views, participated in the maddening ceremony, and the drinking became deep and universal. Old as he was, Jollops was present, with his two sons, all three of whom were early laid away dead drunk; and the number disposed of in like manner went on increasing till the break of day. The pride of character and respect for the presence of ladies which, in more refined communities, hold gentlemen under restraint, had little influence among the rude and uncouth Mapletonians. The young men became intensely heated and furiously pugnacious from strong drink, insomuch that at twelve of the night a rivalship for position among the ladies involved them in a regular set-to, from which they barely escaped with life. A more horrible spectacle of disfigured features and bruised limbs, covered with gory clots of blood, can hardly be conceived.

Thomas Bludgeon, the town bully, took the lead in this

row. He was a short man, with iron sinews, a compact frame, and a fearless spirit, whose strength exceeded that of all his compeers,— to whom blows and bruises were mere matters of sport, and whose granite fist could lay the strongest man low at a single stroke. Thomas swept the field of all opponents, and returned to the ladies covered with glory. They too, excited with wine and toddy, clapped him tumultuously; and the dance was renewed with *furor*, and continued till the gray dawn dimmed their lamps and closed their orgies.

The next day the publican found two hundred dollars' worth of his wares broken and strewn in fragments about his house. He brought in a bill for the same against the managers, who refused payment, under plea of not being the parties to occasion the damage. A law-suit followed, which was protracted through many months at an enormous expense, drawing all the interests of the town in its wake, and producing incurable feuds between those who had before lived in harmony. This was but the beginning of sorrows. The ties of virtue were snapped where they were deemed soundest, and men turned out drunkards who were least of all suspected. The groggery swarmed with sots. Such a winter Mapleton had never seen. The Sunday-school was abandoned of all except a few families,

"Who faithful proved among the faithless."

Mrs. Douglass and Mrs. Durham persisted still in their work, though the tide of influence was all against them. They lived in constant jeopardy of their husbands. Their nights were sleepless, and their days anxious and gloomy. They had the address as yet, however, to keep them out of the way of temptation. Their husbands seemed themselves conscious of the danger, though not a word was breathed on the sub-

ject. It was too delicate a subject for their conjugal communings. The good Mr. Littlefield, encouraged by Mr. Holliston, continued to lift up his warning voice to the few that came to hear; but it made no present impression on the morals of the town. Bacchus was the sole divinity of the masses; riot, obscenity and drunkenness, were his litany and his rubric.

An event occurred early in May which made a strong impression. Old Mr. Jollops had been into the neighborhood of the Gore Inn on a matter of business, where he lingered through the day in a state of partial intoxication. About ten at night he started for home, a distance of four miles, but did not reach his destination. His sons went early next morning in search of him, and found him about a quarter of a mile from his own house, lying on the ground, with his neck broken, by a fall from his wagon, in a state of intoxication. This gave a momentary check to the general dissipation, especially as Mr. Littlefield had the opportunity at his funeral of addressing the assembled town an earnest and affectionate remonstrance against the prevailing vice.

But the impression soon wore off. The summer was even more riotous than the winter, by reason of its greater facility for out-door dissipation. All the interests of the town were going to decay. A large part of the harvest of that summer was left to return ungathered to the ground, because the people were too intemperate and indolent to attend to it. And, whereas there ought to have been an advance of one or two tenths in the number of acres sowed that autumn, to keep pace with the increasing population, there was, on the contrary, a falling off of more than one third. Farms were actually going to decay in a young town where the soil was in the freshness of its strength, and repaid a hundred-fold.

The Sabbaths were spent in the groggery, in strolls along the lake-shore, fishing, hunting, wrestling, fighting, pitching quoits, and in other amusements still more debasing to society. The teachers of common schools, finding few scholars and little pay, were compelled to leave their occupation, while the children ran wild in the streets and woods. The poor-rate of the town, which had hitherto been merely nominal, now ran up to the highest mark for towns of its size, and families had to be provided for which had enjoyed comfort and thrift.

An event occurred, on one of these riotous Sabbaths, in which the devil outwitted himself, and, by urging an emissary too far, converted him into a powerful assailant of his own cause. This was Thomas Bludgeon. The riotous company had amused themselves that morning by taking a deer which the hounds had driven into the lake; after which they had strolled along the shore till they reached a grove which crowned a high bank, its lofty tops rising more than a hundred feet above the level of the water. Here fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, brothers and sisters, friends and enemies, were congregated under the shade of the thick trees, with a fresh supply from the groggery passing round in a jug, to whet up their faculties, and prepare them for deeds of folly and madness. Under the seductive excitement, Thomas crept along on the trunk of a tree which jutted over the abyss, till he reached the top, where, flapping his arms as a cock his wings, he crowed cheerily to the company below. This called the attention of his mother to his fearful position, when, frantic with fear and rage, and not a little excited by draughts from the jug, she commanded him, in furious accents, to come down; but the saucy fellow only derided her authority.

"I tell you there, Tom, come down from that tree, or you 'll be killed!" again repeated Mrs. Bludgeon, in a louder and more imperious tone.

"An't I old enough to do as I please, for all you, mother?" hallooed Thomas, in an insulting manner.

"Tom, come down, or I 'll beat your brains out!" said Mrs. Bludgeon, in a still more violent tone, and with a movement of her athletic person, as if she felt herself competent to deal with her son as she had done in his boyhood.

"You 'll find that a hard task, mother, I guess," replied Thomas, still climbing higher. The poor woman now screamed with rage and vexation, feeling the intense bitterness of those who fail to govern their families in childhood, or command their respect in riper years. Some of the more sober present besought Thomas to consider his mother's feelings, and come down from his perilous situation. But it was now too late to withstand his excited ambition, which could scarcely have been greater had he been committed to a deed that should spread his fame as far as morning diffuses its light. Not satisfied with adhering to the trunk of the tree, he now crept along on one of its branches, hanging in mid-air, full a hundred feet above the yawning deep. This movement rendered his mother frantic, and a scene ensued of a comico-tragical kind,— to make one laugh behind his tears. Cursing and condolence were alternately blended in the same breath, as the disobedience or death of her son alternately preponderated in her view.

"You devil,— you torment,— you fool-hardy villain, Tom," said she, "die, and done with it!" Then a protracted whine ensued, ending in the pathetic exclamation, "O, Tommy, my dear Tommy! how can I see you die so? O, Tommy! my son, my son!" In a twinkling her anger would get the

better of her tenderness, and she would rage more furiously than ever. "Come down there, Tom, or I 'll beat you as long as I can see! * * * O, Tommy, my love, my darling! dead—dead—dead! O—O—O—O—O!" when she sunk down, alike insensible to anger, at the folly of her child, and to lamentation over his lifeless form.

In regaining the trunk of the tree, Thomas came to a sense of his awful situation, and was relaxed with fear. It was soon seen that he must fall, and a few men ran round with a boat in all haste, to do what they could to save him, in case he emerged alive from the water. Fortunately, after hanging to the limb as long as he could, he dropped feet foremost; so that when he emerged he felt no other injury than a sense of suffocation. This fall left an impression on the mind of Thomas Bludgeon of the evils of intemperance, and of the pernicious traffic in ardent spirits, which made him ever after a perfect thunderbolt in the cause of reform. He mounted the *stump*, first in every neighborhood of his own town, and then all abroad, attracting around him countless multitudes, whom he kept in peals of laughter by his wit, or drenched in tears by his pathos, or burning with indignation, even to mob violence, by his terrible assaults upon classes and characters.

"How dare you speak so?" called out a friend of temperance, under one of his scalding harangues.

He paused, and glanced his burning eye over the vast auditory, exclaiming, "Speak so? speak so?—how dare I speak so? What dare I not do against a monster which is devouring us by scores and by thousands? If I were to uncap the pit, I could not find in it a more detestable fiend than this factor in rum. No, no," he added, with tears streaming down his face,

"our sons and daughters, and fathers and mothers, and magistrates and people, all, all alike suffer from the fell destroyer!"

Upon this he stated an array of facts, familiar to his audience, so dreadful and astounding that they no longer wondered that he should dare to speak as he did.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALCOHOL AND RELIGION.

"After three glasses of wine, I am no longer master of my actions. Without being at the moment conscious of the change, I begin to see, and feel, and hear, and reason differently. The minor transitions between good and evil are forgotten; the lava boils in my bosom. Three more, and I am a madman."—*Harper's Magazine.*

THE Mapleton groggery was, like honey to bees and flies, the point of attraction to all kinds of contradictory characters. Among others, the Gilfort family, to which Samuel, Skampton's factor, belonged, came to town, attracted by their son's prospects, and by the flattering account which he gave of it as a field for money-digging. They had spent their lives in border settlements, gradually receding as population advanced; and, so far back that "the memory of man runneth not to the contrary," they had been affected by this most singular mania to be always digging for buried coin, or buried something, which the previous races of men were supposed to have deposited in caves now overgrown by wilderness trees. Though they got nothing but poverty and disappointment for their labor, yet this did not at all abate their superstitious

zeal, inasmuch as they were never long enough free from the disguising and bewitching influence of alcohol to admit of their returning to the practical good sense of obtaining an honest livelihood. It has been said by a late writer that "it has ever been the mania of mankind to ascribe the actions of their fellow-creatures to all motives but the true; but if they saw clearly, and spoke honestly, they would admit that more heroes had been made by the bottle than the sword." And the wildest freaks of fanaticism often owe their inspiration to the same frantic divinity.

The effect of drinking on some constitutions is to make them superstitious. They never manifest religious sensibility, except when they are intoxicated. Then they are tender, sympathetic, contrite, devout, and free to introduce high discourse of religion and duty. The elements of religion are in our nature, and whatever excites us at all is quite as apt to show its effects here as at any other point. The voluptuous habits of Mahomet made him a visionary, and gave birth to his sensual heaven. Joe Smith was indebted to the bottle for his early inspirations. Byron's highest flights were with an alcoholic Pegasus. No marvel, then, that an offshoot of such a family as that of the Gilforts should give birth to a new form of spiritual disease, adapted to propagate itself among constitutions fitted to take the infection. Samuel Gilfort had drawn in alcohol with his mother's milk. His first ideas were shaped by money-digging, and his earliest efforts were with the mineral rod, which, in his hands, was supposed to work towards the buried ingots with great activity and precision. He lived from childhood in a region of mysterious fancies. His dreams seemed to him an index of destiny. If he lifted a stone, a spirit started from under it. If he held a golden leaf from the autumnal forest, it was

written with enigmatical characters. If he heard the rumbling of distant thunder, or saw the fiery edge of lightning cleave the sky,—if the murmur of dashing surf, or the hum of distant insects, jostled his nerves,—they were angels or devils imparting to him the secrets of a higher world. His education and his habits, and, most of all, his constant potations, which had the singular effect of inflaming his absurd spiritualism, had wrought in him so that he now came to feel that he was not born for mere money-digging,—from which he was shrewd enough to perceive his family had gained nothing,—but to act in the higher character of seer, prophet, or in some other capacity not yet distinctly defined to his view. He was full of the mesmerism of alcohol and of divination, and he was a "medium" in fact, though not yet in form.

Gilfort was a genius in his way, and had a wonderful power of fascinating those who fell under his influence He never lost the command of himself through strong drink, but his potations seemed to supply a necessary stimulus to the shrewdest, highest exertion of his faculties. He could stand more than any living man. Alcohol was to him, as we before hinted, the *pharmacia* of the ancients; a word which hangs, *in medio*, between a physical and a spiritual meaning,—a drug for the body and an inspiration for the mind. Opium and alcohol have always been celebrated for this double influence. Human nature is a mysterious thing, especially in its spiritual elements. It has nothing so purely divine as not to blend in with the carnal and worldly; and sometimes even with craft, cunning, fraud and superstition, insomuch as to make it difficult to tell where the one begins or the other ends. Samuel Gilfort was never so far merged in his intense fanaticism as to lose sight of the chances of bettering his condition in the world. In him the burning enthusiasm of

an anchorite, or the narcotic and alcoholic inspiration of a De Quincey, a Burns, and a Coleridge, was *Yankeeized*, or conjoined to the shrewd tricks of a Connecticut pedler, in securing as much worldly good as possible from the exercise of his extraordinary powers.

Gilfort had around him a gang of worthless fellows, whom he had deluded into his own wild ideas about buried coin, the mineral-rod, and his own exalted functions, known in town under the general appellation of money-diggers. They all lived in habitual expectation that, through their leader, something would turn up to their advantage. This hope was further strengthened by the shrewdness of his measures, especially in his partnership with Skampton in the purchase of the Falls tract, which had already brought him some thousands, and promised a still richer harvest. Still, money alone did not satisfy the demands of Gilfort's ambition. He desired position, influence, and a great leadership. He would make himself captain of something and of somebody, to enjoy the sweets of power and the luxury of dominion.

In this state of mind he and his gang set off to renew the search for money, or something — they hardly knew what — which they supposed was hid in the bowels of the earth. Their potations, before starting and by the way, were deep, which the more inflamed superstition, and frenzied the imagination. The place of digging was Forest Point, a long, narrow arm of the continent, jutting into the lake, covered with thick trees. The hour was midnight,— solemn, gloomy, profound. Gilfort and his company had dug there before, but found, to their surprise, that the earth had been replaced; which led him to exclaim, "Eh! the devils have been meddling; but we 'll see who beats, this time!" This he said from the common

notion among money-diggers that to get buried coin involves a battle with its guardian spirits.

"Where shall we place the lamp?" inquired one of the company, all of whom seemed awe-struck and spell-bound as soon as they reached the spot.

"We 'll see," said Gilfort, taking the mineral-rod and holding it in a semi-circular form, tightly pressed by one hand near one end, and the other near the other end. Soon the rod commenced twirling and crawling like a serpent,— by the art of the holder more than his magic,— till at length it became quiet, with one end pointing obliquely to a mound of earth, like a grave, in the centre of the replaced dirt. "There, hang your lamp directly over that mound," added Gilfort. Accordingly a blue taper was suspended to an overhanging branch to afford light in digging, the odor from which was strongly tinctured with brimstone, as if they had to do with beings accustomed to that element. Now not a word was spoken, and no sound was heard except that of the shovel and the falling dirt, united to the surf, the cries of the screech-owl, the howling of distant wolves, and some such dismal notes of the midnight chorus in a boundless wilderness.

At length the diggers struck upon something which rumbled like a coffin, or some such deposit, in the bosom of the earth. A shudder went through the company,— the more so from a superstition among them that, when a chest of money is touched, all the devils set to guard it exert their powerful incantations to wrest it from those who would secure it, and, if they do not succeed in breaking the spell in some way, the treasure will escape their hands, and will be sunk still deeper in the earth. The diggers felt, therefore, that the hole swarmed with watchful fiends; cold horror curdled

their blood, and Gilfort seemed in an agony, as if grappling with some power which was more than a match for him. Seizing a canteen of whiskey, he quaffed a luscious draught, and handed it round to his men. Still, his spirit was greatly perturbed, the perspiration started from every pore, his countenance was hideously distorted, and he seemed on the point of going into convulsions. Whether it might not have been a premonitory symptom of delirium tremens is a question. Certain it is, *that* disease when produced by alcohol, and only then, is allied, more than all other diseases, to Satanic agency. The whiskey enabled him to breathe easier, and he exclaimed, "Victory, victory! you 're floored, you 're floored! Off, devils, off! I conjure you, by all the powers, be off! Strike, boys, strike!— dig, dig, dig, with all your might!"

The dirt now flew up more rapidly than ever. The men, too, felt the quickening of the canteen spirit. Each stroke of the shovel gave indubitable evidence of something under their feet more sonorous than earth and stones. It sounded, it rumbled,—now from the stroke of the spade, now from falling stones, and now from the feet of the men,— till, at length, a deep, hollow groan came up from the bowels of the earth, as from an imprisoned spirit in his adamantine dungeon. The men were mad with fright, and Gilfort could restrain them no longer. They all fled, and he after them; but a happy thought occurred to him, and he returned, and, by dint of persuasion, succeeded in bringing two or three of his most courageous followers with him. They stood listening in solemn stillness, with their heads bowed over the pit, when they distinctly heard a voice muttering, under ground, "Be off, by St. Pathrick! be off, or I 'll be the death of you, I will! Murther — murther — murther!" was next shrieked out from stentorian lungs, but stifled and suppressed by a

sense of suffocation. Then all was hushed, and they listened. The stillness was horrible. The hearts of the men smote their sides with four times the usual strength. We have it from one who confessed the facts. He said it seemed as if his heart would leap out of his mouth. Whatever were Gilfort's previous ideas, the thought now occurred, "There 's flesh here, as well as spirit. It 's a godsend. Now 's my time, and I must make the most of it. Who knows but we may have a resurrection? Yea, if not one thing, then another. My men 'll be witnesses, and it 'll be seen whether I 'm a mere adventurer."

This was no sooner thought, than the muttering, or rather soliloquizing, began again. "Och, Pat, yer com'd up with, at lingth, for that ye kicked the blissed life out on her, ye did. Jenny, daer, don't I love ye? — don't ye love me? Fait, bad luck to ye, Pat, to be dead as yet ye live! Upon me sowl, there is no brathin; me brith laves jist as I 'd be after catching it, and my chist lapes out and in, like a hoss with the haves." There was a solemn stillness again, and the men still listened, more dead than alive. Then followed a furious exclamation, "The sarpent! the sarpent! There, he 's comin'; he 'd be after choking me! O! O!" resounding upon the canopy of night with suffocated violence, like a man who feels a serpent entwining around his neck. They seemed the yells of a disturbed ghost, to frighten the wild beasts from their native haunts.

Gilfort got down upon his hands and knees, put his head into the hole, and uttered a piercing cry, hoping to get a response; but in vain,— the muttering being again resumed. "What mother's son ever lived to see hiself dead? Och, you ugly baste with a divel's head, what brings ye again? Do ye think to stop me brith? By Saint Pathrick, I'll bate your

brains out, I will! Take that, yer divil's head!" when a powerful kick followed, upheaving the lid of the unnailed box, in which a man in grave-clothes was revealed in the blue light.

"By all the saints, where am I?" said the man, now speaking more freely, from the admission of air.

"In hell," said Gilfort, in a guttural, unearthly tone.

"Measther, plase yer honor, who be you?"

"The devil," said Gilfort, in a horrible tone.

"Yer riverence, Measther Divil, where 's the praest?"

"It 's too late for the priest to help you; you are already in hell!"

"Fait, bad luck to ye, Pat! It 's an ill bargain ye have made, to get out of purgatory. What 's a praest good for, upon me sowl?"

"There 's no help for you," said Gilfort, keeping up the illusion, for some cause not easily explained.

"Och, Pat, be asy," said the man, "and take a wee dhrap for yer thirst. Ulaloo, yer riverence! do you kape anything to dhrink?"

"Yes; melted brimstone and liquid fire," replied Gilfort, not comprehending his meaning.

"Och, on my sowl, what mother's son can drink the like of that? No gin, brandy, rum or whiskey, in all hell, to hilp a man that 's not to be hilped?"

Gilfort now understood his customer; but to the unfortunate man the illusion was complete. He really thought, from the hue and odor of the light, from his sense of suffocation, from the devils that haunted him, and from the tone and manner in which Gilfort addressed him, that he was in hell. But, conscious still of the raging appetite of the drunkard, no fear, no horror, no sense of the soul's infinite and eternal

loss, could extinguish the desire which had become the all-absorbing, the all-consuming impulse of his being. Gilfort saw that now was his time; and, casting his gleaming eyes upon his men, he said, in a tone of command, "Stand still, and see the salvation of God. The end of our money-digging is gained. A man redeemed is of more value than chests of gold. It is an intimation from above, that men, not money, should be the object of our pursuit." He then uttered a shrill sound, like the whistle of a locomotive, which jarred frightfully upon the buried man's nerves, and threw him into a tremor from head to foot. "In the name of God, man, come forth!" he added. At this the buried man started up, threw off his grave-clothes, and, receiving a draught from the canteen, he soon recovered his consciousness, and was lifted out of his grave by Gilfort's followers.

The sequel proved that it was Tooney, who, after killing his wife, ran away, and enlisted in the United States army. He remained long enough to get his bounty-money and first pay of wages, when he deserted, and strolled back towards his former home, as fast as perpetual drunkenness would allow. On the beach of Forest Point he was taken with a fit, and when found was supposed to be dead, and to have been washed up by the surf, as he was drenched with water and covered with spray. A few persons had collected, at an early hour of the previous night, put him into a rude coffin, and buried him in a hole which they found already dug to their hand. It was no uncommon thing to bury bodies thus washed up, without jury or coroner, in a partially organized community, like that of Mapleton; and to do it at night, as a partial relief against offensive odors. In this case, it was done more from habit than necessity. Whether Gilfort anticipated the result is an unsettled question. He cer-

tainly could not know that the man would revive, and it was doubtless purely accidental that he should have found him. Men find what they seek. If they prowl about at night in pursuit of prodigies, prodigies will not be wanting. Gilfort's passion in this line amounted to a disease, the fruit no doubt of artificial excitement and preposterous training.

Distorted statements of this matter got abroad, and produced intense excitement among the Mapleton people. The friends of Gilfort insisted that he had raised a man from the dead, which served the more to increase the magic and mystery which invested his name. The neighbors testified to the fact of having buried a man whose personal appearance answered to that of one whom they now saw at Gilfort's alive. The vacated grave on Forest Point, also, bore testimony that he was not there. The man himself affirmed that he had been in hell, and had been delivered by Gilfort. The money-diggers added their testimony, carefully stating only so much as to invest the scene with mystery and miracle. The ignorant Mapletonians, fond of the marvellous, as a general thing leaned to that view of the subject. A small minority of the more sober and discerning accepted the facts as they were, simply giving credit to the money-diggers for having, by accident, released a man, who had been incautiously buried alive, from the most dreadful of all situations. There was a great commotion on the occasion; and Bludgeon, whose stump oratory now wielded a strong influence in town, procured the appointment of a committee to investigate and report the facts, of which he was made chairman. The committee met at Gilfort's both the raised man and the whole money-digging fraternity.

Bludgeon began the investigation by inquiring of the man his name.

"Pathrick Tooney, plase yer honor."

"When did you come to town?"

"The dael knows,— sure not meself."

"What brought you here?"

"The sarpents driv me. There's them now, by Saint Pathrick! Be off, ye ill bastes, or I'll be the death of ye!" he exclaimed, kicking and striking with great violence, so that it was with difficulty that the sturdy money-diggers kept him from injuring himself.

"The man's crazy," said Bludgeon, having never before seen a case of delirium tremens.

"No, he's possessed," replied one of Gilfort's followers, "but the power that called him from the grave can cast out the devils."

"Can one rum devil cast out another rum devil?" said a member of the committee, who suspected the nature of the disease.

"I shall suffer no slanderous imputations in my own house," said Gilfort, with a tone that roused his followers, and made it unsafe for the committee to pursue its investigations.

"Truth demands the investigation, and I'll have it, if I die!" replied Bludgeon, with a movement of his iron frame that made the company cower before such a battery of bodily strength. "The story is abroad that you, Gilfort," he added, "have raised this man from the dead, and I am determined to know the truth of the matter."

"Glad to have the truth known," said Gilfort, "but I must not be insulted."

"No offence intended," said the committee-man whose remark had raised this flurry.

"You, then, have no recollection of coming here? But where did you come from?" said Bludgeon to Tooney.

"I com'd from the barracks," said Tooney; "and I tuk a dhrap for me hilth at Clareville [Clearville, a little town on the eastern border of Mapleton], and those bastes began laping, and walluping, and skolloping, roond me head like divils; and I run, run, run, till I run ——"

"Well, where?" interrupted Bludgeon.

"To hell!" said the man, with a shudder of horror.

"He means that he run till he dropped dead on Forest Point," said one of the money-diggers.

"What kind of a place is hell?" said Bludgeon.

"An' faith, it 's beyond me spaking; — so dark, so boond as to me hands and fate,— so crawlin' all over with snakes,— so tight, tight! O! there 's no brathing."

"And how did you escape?"

"In fath, I thought to get a dhrap for me thirst, and to find a praest to get the worth of me money; but not the divil of a bit did they hilp me, till that man, blessed sowl he is!" pointing to Gilfort, "guv me relase, and withal a dhrap that ased me much."

"Then whiskey raised you from the dead?" said Bludgeon, with a sneer. "What agency had you in the matter, Mr. Gilfort?"

"I claim simply to have had a presentiment that I must dig that night on Forest Point," said Gilfort, with great apparent fairness. "I obeyed, and the dead man was brought to life, and, he says, delivered from hell; which I am prepared to believe, from the spectres which have haunted him since."

Thus Bludgeon elicited nothing to shake the confidence of the vulgar rabble in Gilfort's mysterious powers.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune."

So it proved with Gilfort. His Falls tract speculation gave him money, which he invested in an enormous tract of government land beyond the Mississippi. And this resurrection hoax operated like magic to draw colonists around him, who not only paid him a large advance on the cost of his lands, but raised him to a peerless elevation as the ruler of their destiny. But, whatever spiritual hold Gilfort may have taken on the deluded people, it is certain that the physical ones of rum and illicit love were far more powerful. Venus and Bacchus were notoriously the divinities of his colony, and the great charm to those of a voluptuous imagination.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ALCOHOLIC TRAFFIC REACHES A CRISIS IN MAPLETON.

"It may be so; but yet my inward soul
Persuades me it is otherwise. Howe'er it be,
I cannot but be sad: so heavy sad,
As — though, in thinking, on no thought I think —
Makes me, with a heavy nothing, faint and shrink.

SHAKSPEARE.

IT had by this time come to be whispered in Mapleton that Messrs. Douglass and Durham had nothing to boast of, over their neighbors, on the score of drunkenness. "They are at heart as bad as we," was the consoling unction which many a tippler took to his conscience. "They need n't think to set themselves above us; we know all about them. Gumpton (the innkeeper, where they were intoxicated on the way) has

told us, and it's not worth while for them to play the hypocrite. Mr. Skampton, too, says he has seen them both drunk; and they'll be drunk again, without a doubt. Their families need n't set themselves up in this way."

The pains which Gumpton and Skampton had taken to propagate this scandal looked two ways; first, to destroy the effect of remonstrances from those families against the liquor-traffic, and, second, to reveal the danger that lurked within their own doors. Every measure was taken by interested persons to involve Douglass and Durham in the common dissipation. They were invited on all convivial occasions, were offered a treat at every trifling pretext, and were exposed to all those arts by which drinkers know so well how to decoy those whose appetites are like their own. But, as yet, their efforts availed nothing. Temperance yet overspread these families with a peace and prosperity which made them a green oasis amid the general desolation.

Still, the fears which reigned within their doors none knew but themselves and their God. Mrs. Durham was in that condition to make a wife feel more than ever dependent on her husband, and was rapidly approaching her crisis of pain and agony. The winter had been unusually cold, thus far, and the snow, in Mapleton, had fallen deeper than ever before. Mr. Durham attempted little business, beyond the care of his stock, and the provision of fuel, to cope with the rigor of the season. The most of his time he spent within doors, to cheer his wife's despondency by reading and enlivening conversation. Their little Amelia said, one morning, at the breakfast-table,

"Mamma, I had a queer dream last night."

"What was your dream, my love?" inquired her mother.

"I thought the snow fell and fell, till it got as high as the top of the trees, and that our house was covered with it so deep

that we could get no wood. I thought the fire all went out, and then the sun went out too, and did not shine any more; and it was so cold, cold,— O, how cold! I thought I put my hand on you, and you was cold as ice; and then on dear Charley, and he was cold as ice; and then on Sis, and she was cold; and I felt myself getting to be ice, too, and shivered all over, dreadfully. Then I thought papa came home; and he was changed into ice, and we were all ice together."

"My sweet Milly," said her mother, "you got the clothes off, no doubt, and slept cold; that made you dream so."

"No, mamma; when I waked up, I was just as warm as I am now."

"Milly has seen so much snow this winter, no wonder she dreams so," said her father. "I think it's a sign we are going to have warm weather; for dreams go by contraries, you know."

"I guess mamma don't think so," said little Lydia, looking up, with a cunning and embarrassed look, out of her glistening eyes, as if she were saying something she ought not.

"Why not, you black-eyed pet?" said her father, gayly.

"Because she weeps; I saw her weep to — to-morrow," added the child, hesitating whether to use that word or "yesterday."

"No; yesterday, you mean, dearest," said her father.

"Yes, she weeps sometimes," replied Lydia.

"My dear wife," said Mr. Durham, with genuine tenderness, "I have mistrusted what this little witness testifies of you. I am afraid you have some grief at heart which you do not tell me of."

"No, Charles, none, except that, in my present condition, I cannot bear to have you a minute out of my sight. We are so far from neighbors, and I am now so helpless, that, if

you are gone an hour, I tremble all over, like an aspen-leaf. I am all the time thinking that something may happen to you when I could neither relieve you nor help myself, nor do anything for our dear little ones, so perfectly powerless do I feel myself to be. These are foolish feelings, I know; but I cannot help them. They will come up, in spite of me; and I suppose they may have caused me to shed the tears which dear little Sis has brought into court against me."

"That reminds me to say — what I have had in my mind some days — that I think we had better get Ma'am Tobey to stay with you till after your confinement. She is said to be an excellent nurse, and, withal, a very agreeable companion. This will relieve your feelings, my dear Amelia, during the few hours of the day I am compelled to be out of the house."

"You are very kind, my husband," replied Mrs. Durham, with tears of gratitude glistening in her eyes. "Perhaps it would be advisable. We cannot tell what may happen to one in my circumstances; and I cannot overcome my fear of being left alone with the children."

"Well, I will attend to a few things about the farm this morning, and then will go, with the sleigh, and bring Ma'am Tobey. I know she will take it as a favor to come, in her present dependent situation. Her husband and sons, having sunk together into the slough of our town drunkery, are gone all the time; and I am told that she, poor thing, has neither food to eat nor fuel to keep her warm."

Accordingly, Mr. Durham left immediately after dinner, kissing his wife and children tenderly, and assuring them that he would be back before dark, and they need not fear. Still, Mrs. Durham felt a timidity she could not overcome. A heavy cloud hung upon her spirits, for which she could not account. She betook herself to prayer, in which she found

strong consolation from the hope of a better world, where maternal solicitude would visit her no more, where the storms of winter, then howling fearfully around her dwelling, would no more overcast her serene sky, and where anxiety for her husband's safety, in person or morals, would not hold her in suspense and torture,— but where all would be security, peace and joy, transporting and immortal. Her hopes and aspirations acquired a mysterious unearthliness, as if nothing more awaited her in this region of death, but only in the bright reversion of angelic life and immortal day.

To amuse herself, she gathered her little ones around her, and spent several hours in teaching them to read, in talking to them of heaven,— of the happy circles there, where father, mother and children, all meet, and mingle in sweet discourse, to sin no more, to suffer no more, to part no more. Her words were words of inspiration to the dear little group, and they sat listening in rapt meditation, with clasped hands and uplifted and adoring eyes. Night drew on, and the storm raged more and more fearfully. The snow, which began to fall soon after her husband left, had added one or two feet to the underlying accumulation of previous storms, so as to create the most serious apprehension as to whether he could make his way through the drifts. She summoned all her firmness, and all her stock of courage, for the sake of her children. It would have gratified her to see them remain awake, as a relief to her loneliness; but, at their appointed hour, they were sinking into the sweet, profound forgetfulness of childhood's sleep; and she put them into their beds, after hearing them say their prayers.

What next? She strained her eyes at the window, to penetrate the gathering storm and darkness, if possible to catch a glimpse — one hope-inspiring glimpse — of his loved

and adored form; but all, all in vain. No husband came. She listened to hear the familiar tones of his voice, in speaking to his horses; but no sound greeted her, except those of the raging tempest and creaking forests, with the occasional crash of a frost-bound tree or limb, in sinking into the underlying snow. She bethought herself of Charles Douglass' last letter, which she had not answered; took it from her portfolio, and began reading and writing, to divert her thoughts from the horrible ideas which had taken possession of her mind. Young Douglass had been her constant correspondent from the time of his leaving for college; and his last letter contained facts in which she had the liveliest interest, and which, for the moment, had the effect of diverting her mind.

It seems that, when he had nearly completed his senior year, the college was visited by the Honorable Michael Skampton, as this gentleman was called in those parts; or, rather, he passed more frequently as the patron, or patroon,— or, as his enemies would have it, the patron saint,— qualifying terms, except the last, more gratifying to his pride than his civil distinctions, because they touched the point of his character where lay his ruling passion. He lived, and earned, and ground the face of the poor, and trampled on the laws of humanity, and preyed like a vulture on the vices of society, to get the means of buying, on a large scale, reputation and influence as a benefactor. The whole college was called together in the chapel, in anticipation of his arrival; and, when he entered, escorted by the faculty, the assembled students and functionaries rose to do him honor. He was shown the seat usually occupied by the president, the latter gentleman taking a subordinate place to the greatest patron Diddington College had ever enjoyed. Charles, having learned, by this time, the wreck to which he had reduced his

own beautiful Mapleton, by means of his detestable groggery, would not rise with the rest, which exposed him to the reprimand of the faculty, and to the indignation of this modern Haman.

Young Douglass had signalized himself more than any of the students in the cause of temperance. He had induced a large number of them to sign the pledge. He had delivered many temperance lectures in Diddington, and had spent his vacations in lecturing wherever there was an open door. He had had such a fearful home experience of the evils of drinking, that he committed his energies to this cause, and determined to prosecute it by all the means in his power. He made it a point of conscience, however, never to infringe upon college laws or study hours, in doing it. The faculty had no charge of neglect or insubordination to allege against him. True, he had made himself obnoxious to the wine-bibbing students, and particularly to his old friend and school-fellow, Harry Howard, whose habits were very dissipated. Harry's parents were wealthy, and furnished him all the money he desired to expend, which was not a little. Money, not study, preserved his standing in his class. His nights were spent in revelling, in spite of college law or discipline; his lessons were neglected, and he was the ringleader in mischief. Charles felt all the tenderness for Harry of his childhood's recollections, and, for a time, associated with him on terms of too much familiarity. This brought him acquainted with many of Harry's tricks, which, when questioned by the faculty on the subject, he found he must conceal by lies or confess with honesty. In an alternative like this, he had but one course before him, and that was to speak the truth. This brought upon him the malignity of young Howard, and of the rowdies under his influence, who let no

opportunity slip of treating him with abuse and slander. Their stories to the faculty had little effect, because the motive of them was too well understood.

But Skampton, who was president of the board of trustees, and more powerful than the faculty, drank in their stories with avidity. He collected the names of the students who were known to be associated with Charles in the temperance cause,— all of whom, as it appeared, were also on the same foundation to which he had been admitted,— and gave them a formal reprimand for their course, and particularly for slandering Master Howard. There were twelve of the students whose names Skampton had on a bit of paper before him, that of Douglass being at the head of the list. Reading over these names, he said, "Young gentlemen, I call you together to let you know that you are dependent on my bounty for a place in this college; and, if you do not cease from these temperance lectures and agitations, I'll drop you at once, and leave you to shirk for yourselves."

The blood flushed in Charles' face, and with ill-suppressed indignation he exclaimed, "It is new to me, sir, that I have received a cent of your money. But it shall not be so another day; I will refund it. I will not receive the bounty of a man who has lived by demoralizing society, and whose very money is the price of blood!"

"What do you say, sir?" said Skampton, boiling over with rage.

"I say I will not have your money. I know too well how you get it. I am familiar with the tears, poverty and murder, which it has occasioned in my own town, and among my own friends."

"You are a dirty little dog!" said Skampton, trembling with excitement. "You shall be expelled this college before

the sun goes down, and I'll prosecute your father for slander!"

"Not my father, sir," said Charles; "I am of age, and can answer for myself."

With this Skampton flew out of the house, and left the assembled group to their own way. Charles called on a temperance friend in town, stated the facts of the case, and asked a loan of money to pay up all he had drawn on the Skampton foundation, interest and principal. This was freely granted him; and that night, when the officer came to take him on a charge of slander, he was able to stand up with the proud consciousness of owing nothing to a fund collected by means so detestable, so abhorrent to humanity. The suit fell to the ground by a *nolle prosequi*, Marldon advising his client that the facts following the opening of his Mapleton tavern, which would be magnified to justify what defendant had said against him, rendered such a suit hopeless before any jury to be empanelled in these temperance times. But in the matter of the expulsion Skampton was more successful, because, much as the faculty and trustees regretted it, they felt the leanness of their treasury, and were willing to burn incense to the indignation of a man on whom they were so dependent. For this act, however, Charles did not care a copper, so far as he was concerned. He felt the strength of his own position as a student. He knew he was far in advance of what his class would be when their senior year had expired. Besides, he could study as well out of the walls of a college as in, and much more to his own satisfaction. The loss of a degree he did not value a straw, as the country was filled with graduated dunces; and he gloried in a non-graduating preëminence. There may have been some human feeling in all this; but then it was natural, under the circumstances,

to a young man in the warm blood of his first month's majority, and exposed to such indignities and provocations. Corporations that suffer themselves to be controlled by mercenary considerations and designing men must expect to have the wares in which they deal depreciated in the market, and a loathing to noble minds. So capricious are their doings, in many cases, that it may be said of them, as the lawyer said of the decisions of a petit jury, that, though he believed that God fore-knew whatever comes to pass, he thought such decisions must be excepted from the remark, for they were too uncertain to be fore-known.

The letter which poor Mrs. Durham was amusing herself with detailed, these facts. She read it over and over again, listening to the storm as she read, trembling with fear, and tormented with apprehensions, which none can realize who have not been in her condition; not the least of which was, that her husband might have fallen into this very groggery which had been a cause of so much trouble to young Douglass. She at length took her pen and wrote her full approval of Charles' conduct in the matter, and then proceeded to detail the more recent doings of the alcoholic traffic in Mapleton. She stated the sufferings of poor Ma'am Tobey, and that her husband had then gone to bring her to their house. She informed him that the worthy and venerable Mr. Robson, after inveighing against the groggery with all his might, had been drawn in, and added to the number of its victims. He had been an early prey to intemperate habits, from which he refrained for some years, but was now taken the more easily by the destroyer. His age and infirmities could not withstand this late return to the vice, delirium tremens soon ensued, and he had died in the most dreadful torments. "He begged his friends to kill him at a blow, for

the devils that tormented him were more unendurable than hell itself. O Charles, Charles! what are we to say to these things? How happens it that this alone, of all our diseases, produces such a sense of being tormented by devils? Is it real, or is it altogether imaginary? Do tell me, in your next, what you think."

Then her pen seemed to float at random, as if to divert her own corroding thoughts, more than from any intention of transmitting the uncopied document. "Charles, Charles! what are we to do? Dear me! dear me, husband! why don't you come,— come to your agonized Amelia! The storm howls, howls! O, God! when will he come? The clock strikes eleven. Eleven! O,— O! eleven of this dismal night! and I,— I and my little ones away in this howling wilderness! alone, so many miles from all help and all relief! I can't be quiet! No! no! no! I scream,— I can't help screaming! O, my husband! where are you, dearest, that you come not to the help of your terrified wife, who loves, who adores you? My God, take care of him,— take care of me,— take care of my little ones! Do! do! do! — yes, to heaven take us all! — all, if one must go! O,— O! there, I'm screaming again! I can't help it! O,— O,— O! mad,— mad,— mad! I must to bed." These broken sentences were almost illegible from the tears with which they were bedewed, and doubtless followed by convulsions.

The explanation of this sad delay was as terrific to Mr. Douglass as to poor Durham. It seems that these two gentlemen had unfortunately met nearly opposite that hell of the town, the groggery. It was cold, and snowing fiercely. They sat a short time talking from each other's sleighs, when that emissary of the devil, the landlord, came running out, with his face covered with seductive smiles and his tongue dropping

sweet words like honey-dew, and saying to Mr. Douglass that he had been striving many days to see him, upon a pressing matter of business, and if that gentleman and Mr. Durham would come in and warm themselves a single moment, he would see their horses well cared for, and it would be much to their own comfort. "With his much fair speech he caused them to yield; with the flattery of his lips he forced them; and they went straightway as an ox to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; till a dart struck through their liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knew not that it was for their life." The winds swept over the plain, the lake roared in the distance, with waves as sluggish from anchor ice as a boiling caldron of quicksilver, and the whole scene of wintry cold and desolation without conspired to give point and power to the serpent's charm within, and to the deadly coil in which he was enfolding their hearts.

Their horses all sweating with fatigue in wallowing through the snow, they finally reined up under the shed, and followed their tempter into his hell. Durham hesitated, and hesitated; said his wife was alone, and peculiarly needed his presence; but still he followed. The landlord offered them something to drink, and expatiated on the necessity of it on so cold a day, and after so much exposure. They at first declined, seeming to feel their danger, and to be conscious that they stood on the brink of a precipice. But, after warming themselves a while, and being further plied with fair words by their host, Douglass said he was all in a tremor and chilled to his very vitals; he believed a mug of hot gingered cider would do him good, and he ordered it. He poured a glass for his friend, and also for himself, and they drank it together.

But no sooner had the poison entered their veins than they lost sight of every motive to sobriety, and alcoholic fancies

swarmed around them, like devils in the plumage of paradise. Glass after glass of brandy was called in; Durham began to sing, and Douglass to fight; and the inn was a hell indeed, and they its devils. Douglass staid till twelve of the night, when his two sons, George and Samuel, with a posse of men from the farm, came to hunt for him, suspecting the fact, and, by main force, drew a strait-jacket over him, and took him home, howling to the wintry winds like a fiend from the realm of darkness. That incarnation of evil, the publican, finding Durham peaceable, and, withal, flush of money, hustled him into another room when the young Douglasses came, so that they left without the knowledge of his presence. Nor did their father, in the long-continued series of drunken fits which ensued, mention the fact. The consequence was, that Durham laid two weeks drunk in the groggery. At the expiration of this time, he fell into a profound sleep, from which he did not awake for twelve hours; and, when he did finally awake, the insanity of intoxication had passed, and the first thought he had was of his wife and children. He had no idea of the time of his separation, more than if he had laid all these days in a fit. He sprang convulsively to his feet, and hastened to the shed; but found his horses so nearly starved by the avaricious landlord that he could not trust to their taking him home through the snow. His next thought was to run to Mr. Holliston's, which he did, and acquainted him with the state of his affairs, trusting he might prove a comfort to his wife, both as physician and minister. Mr. Holliston got up his own horses, and took poor Durham to his family with all despatch, being also ignorant of the length of time that he had been absent from them. They passed Ma'am Tobey's, but found the house sunk in a snow-drift, and not a soul in it. This excited alarm in Durham's mind. They then hur-

ried as fast as the unbroken road would admit, struggling on till sundown, when they succeeded in reaching the house; but found it also buried in the snow, and no sign of life near, except a few half-starved and half-frozen cattle. Durham jumped out of the sleigh, and, rushing ahead, pushed his way by force through the closed door, when he found the interior a complete drift, that had come down chimney, and sifted through every unguarded crevice. By this time Mr. Holliston was upon his heels, anxious to find how matters stood within.

But, O, horror! horror! God have mercy on the drunkard's family! There lay Mrs. Durham on her own bed, cold and stiff, with a new-born infant, naked, at her side, also dead and frozen! Behind the mother, and pressed close against her person, was dear little Charles, with his icy arms enfolding her, and every drop of blood congealed in his veins. They then hastened to the little girls' room, and found them in their bed, emaciated to mere skeletons, but not so long dead as to be completely frozen. They, too, were locked in each other's little arms. The fears of poor Mrs. Durham had evidently brought on a premature birth, ending in convulsions, the very night of her husband's departure, and she and the infant had frozen together. Little Charles, with a child's instinct, had clung to his dead mother, and his arms were soon frozen by the icy contact, from which point the frosts of death gradually spread over his whole body. The little girls had kept up as long as they could, without wood or food, and then had crept together into their bed, to find an icy grave. Poor little Amelia's prophetic dream was more than fulfilled.

No words, no description, can reach the reality. It was a charnel-house of the horrible traffic in intoxicating drinks.

The frozen victims of this worse than Moloch, in his thirst for innocent blood, with the lines of sorrow still visible in their indurated features, uttered, in the dumb accents of death, such a remonstrance against our legislation on this subject, as to appal and confound those who have given their voice and vote in its favor, O, detestable legislation! who can number thy dead? Who can estimate thy crimes? Who can tell the extent of the pauperage, the poverty and the wretchedness, which owe their being to thee?

Mr. Holliston was silent, and so was Durham. It was a case to baffle feeling, and beggar language. They dug some wood from under the snow, and lighted a fire. Durham was helpful in all this. Mr. Holliston then proposed to go and bring in the neighbors.

"Mr. Durham," said he, "perhaps you will feel better to go with me."

"No," said Durham, quietly, "you go, and I'll stay and watch the fire and keep the house."

"Very well; I'll be back soon," said Mr. Holliston, not a little surprised at the self-possession of the miserable man. But, had he looked cautiously, he would have seen in it the suicide's calmness. His eyes were glassy and fixed. It was the repose of despair; it was the self-possession of one to whom living was death, and death his only life. Not a tear did he shed, not a groan did he utter, not a complaint did he make. As soon as Mr. Holliston was gone, he took the pen that had dropped from the fingers of his dying wife, thawed out the inkstand, and wrote on the paper, under the last tear-besmeared lines of her agitated hand, the following note:

"This world is my hell. There can be no worse. I have a duty to do to my departed wife and children, which I go

to discharge. I must confess at their feet my crime, and beseech them to forgive me. Dear, dear ones, I follow you to the spirit-land! CHARLES DURHAM."

When Mr. Holliston returned, with the neighbors, they found him hung with a rope to one of the beams of his house, and quite dead.

At the funeral, which was attended by the whole town,—yea, by neighboring towns, also,—Mr. Holliston delivered an address on the evils of the liquor-traffic, in which he detailed its sad ravages in their once peaceful and prosperous town. They then buried the whole family in one grave, laying the dear little infant on the breast of its sorrow-stricken mother, and the others side by side, according to their ages. After the burial, Thomas Bludgeon harangued the assembled multitude.

"Gentlemen," said he, "what's to be done? Here is a den in our town which the sober, respectable and industrious, enter, to come out drunkards, paupers and beggars. Here is a den into which our children are decoyed, and come out a blight to parental hopes. Here is a den which the happy wedded couple visit, only to violate their plighted vows, and become a curse to their children. Here is a den to sink forever the hard earnings of labor; yea, worse, to make them a blight and curse to those by whose sweat they were acquired. This den is inhabited by a sorcerer, the touch of whose wand converts ministers and churches into hypocrites, Sabbaths into scenes of bacchanalian riot and revelry, school-houses into kennels, and earth into hell. Here is a monster before whom law is a rope of sand, and the bonds of society a gossamer web, to be blown to the winds. Here is a school which graduates moderate drinkers confirmed drunkards,

honest people knaves, cut-throats and assassins. Will you suffer this den longer to exist among you? Will you allow this sorcerer to exercise his damnable magic? Will you allow this monster to seize more victims, and this school to multiply among us its detestable pupils?"

"No, no, no!" cried many thousands, all bathed in tears at the spectacle they had witnessed, and mad with indignation against its guilty cause. "Law or no law,— no, no, no! Down with the groggery!"

"Yes, law or no law!" replied Bludgeon; and, raising his hands to heaven, shaking his iron frame in defiance, and casting his flaming eyes in the direction of the inn, he added, "I swear, by the eternal God, *that* hell shall not pollute this town another day. Who dares stand by right against law? Let him speak."

"I dare!" "I!" "I!" "I!" cried innumerable voices. "Down with the groggery! down with the groggery! down with the groggery!"

"Come on, then!" said Bludgeon; "come on, come on, ye men of Mapleton, who are for casting out the devil in spite of priests and lawyers! follow me to the assault!"

"To the assault! to the assault! lead on, and we'll follow! Down with the groggery! down with the groggery!" repeated a thousand stentorian voices, in tones that made the welkin ring. Off rushed the infuriated multitude, headed by Bludgeon, and began their work by emptying the detestable sink of all its valuables, pouring its alcohol into the gutters, and ending by making a bonfire of the building.

"Where 's the landlord? — this hell-hound,— where is he? where is he?" cried innumerable voices.

"Here he is! here he is! hid in the stable!" replied some.

"Bring him out! bring him out!" was the imperious de-

mand on all sides. The trembling publican was brought out, and, after a mock trial, was condemned to a coat of tar and feathers, and to be rode out of town upon a rail. The decree was no sooner passed than executed, and the miserable wretch was dipped into a cask of tar, and then rolled in the feathers of one of his own beds, and, in this plight, was mounted on a rail, which was carried, in solemn procession, a distance of seven miles, where he was placed out of town, with a threat of being worse dealt by if he ever entered it again.

Skampton sued the town, laying his damages at ten thousand dollars. Marldon pleaded his cause, urging the responsibility of government to protect the property of its citizens against mob violence. "Government," he said, "pledges itself to this, by levying and receiving taxes. The tax-payer would have no *quid pro quo*, if he could not claim indemnity against the depredations of a mob. Hence, the state or town is in equity bound to make good the losses thus sustained." It was in vain that the opposing counsel pleaded the law of nuisances against the groggery, because the license of the state, by which it had been established, was urged, on the other side, as an express guarantee of protection, over and above what could be claimed for property in general. "Do you mean to make the state answerable for all the pauperage, misery and murder, which this groggery has introduced into our town?" said the counsel for defendants. "If so, your honors," he added, addressing the court, "nothing remains but to prosecute the state for locating among us a nuisance so destructive to its own laws, so prejudicial to our interests." The cause went against the town, it being mulcted in the sum of five thousand dollars, by means of which Skampton, in due time, restored his groggery, and renewed his work of ruin among the people.

CHAPTER X.

THE DESPAIR AND HOPE OF A DRUNKARD'S SON.

"Go feel what I have felt,—
Go bear what I have borne;
Sink 'neath the blow a father dealt,
And the cold world's proud scorn.
Then suffer on from year to year,
Thy sole relief the scorching tear."

CHARLES' return to Mapleton was attended by a melancholy pleasure. He rejoiced to meet his friends, but mourned — O, how bitterly! — at the corrupted state of society and family wrecks which the traffic in intoxicating drinks had occasioned. He visited the desolated home of the Durhams, and found the house occupied by cattle, the conservatory a resort of swine, the garden overrun with weeds, and all its beauty defaced, all its glory departed. He remembered his first visit to the place, and the scene of domestic beauty and bliss over which Mrs. Durham then presided as a divinity, a voluntary exile from that society whose laws and customs were so fatal to her happiness. But there was no hiding from the demon. It had pursued her even in exile; and here, even here, so far away from neighbors, so hid from civil society, that society had pursued her with its ruinous legislation, and consigned her and her beloved family to one common grave. He walked a little beyond the house into a beautiful grove of young maples, and there he found the new-made grave surmounted by a white marble slab, erected by the contributions of the people, and inscribed as follows:

"CHARLES DURHAM and his Wife.
AMELIA DURHAM and their Four Children.
AMELIA CAROLINE.
LYDIA DOUGLASS.
CHARLES, Junior, and
BENONI.
All victims of the traffic in alcoholic poisons."

Underneath Charles wrote, "MURDERED BY UNRIGHTEOUS LEGISLATION."

Young Douglass lingered long in this grove, weeping bitter tears over the associations of the place. He thought of the buoyant, girlish days of Mrs. Durham, when she was the hope of her family, the belle and pride of her town; and also of the fatal steps which led to her marriage with one so noble in character, and yet so hopelessly doomed by a predisposition to vice inherited from the drinking habits of a former generation, and by the gins and snares provided by state legislation to insure his ruin. And these dear little ones, whose only crime was to be born of such a father and under such laws, thus given over to a mode of death which, to think of, makes the blood curdle with horror! O, God! how mysterious are thy providences, and thy ways past finding out! He thought of the constant peril in which his own family lived from the same cause,— a peril which, though just then somewhat diminished by mob right against legal and organic wrong, yet which would return upon them, perhaps, with more fearful results than ever, as soon as some licensed emissary of the state had the opportunity to renew among them the cruel traffic. He was affected by the evidence furnished that the last rational thoughts of poor Mrs. Durham were directed to himself. The answer of his letter, begun in a sound mind, but ending in distraction, to be followed by convulsions and the pains

of child-birth, endured all alone, and terminating in her own death and that of all her family,— this seemed to Charles too dreadful to think of. He spent days in weeping over the fate of the family. Nor was he alone in this. The whole town and country manifested the liveliest sensibilities on the subject; and for a time it produced almost a total suspension of those drinking habits which had caused all the trouble. Indeed, the temptation to drinking had, to a great extent, perished with the groggery. The poison was not now obtruded upon them as before, and the families which had survived the wreck returned to their occupations, and were prosperous again. Mr. Littlefield's meetings were fuller, and his labors better appreciated. The children returned to the neglected Sunday-school. The memory of their former teacher — the good and beautiful, but now so sadly unfortunate, Mrs. Durham — lived in their minds as a sweet relic of the past, to awaken in them bitter regrets at their own defection, which had been to her a cause of so much anxiety.

Charles found his father wonderfully altered in appearance. His long-continued course of dissipation after that first fatal night, and, most of all, his share in the sad catastrophe of the Durham family, preyed upon his mind, and he rarely ever smiled. His downfall had deprived him of the high position which he had enjoyed in town, and made him an object of loathing to himself. Mrs. Douglass and Charles did all they could to reässure him. They saw, they felt, that the evil of his case did not so much consist in his present occasional aberrations, as in those habits of what is called temperate drinking, wherein the appetite originated which was now so uncontrollable. That in which the wrong really lay had made him respectable, a boon companion, a fine gentleman, whose society was courted, and who was deemed

every way worthy of respect and confidence. But the consequences, wherein he was comparatively innocent, and more to be pitied than blamed, caused him to be despised and abhorred. His wife and son took more just views of the subject, and never remitted their kindness to him, even when most deteriorated and degraded. They felt and deplored the wreck of a husband and father which the drinking customs of society had entailed upon them. But, inasmuch as this was their unhappy lot, in common with thousands of other families, they felt it a call in Providence to watch over him, to bear with his infirmities, to alleviate his sufferings, to fortify him against temptation, and to do their utmost to repair the evil which society and the laws had done upon one in whom they had so tender an interest. This was right. There is nothing left to the unhappy victims of the drinking customs and license laws of society but to bide their time, while they pray, with the souls under the altar, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth!"

The person of Charles, during his years of absence, had grown into manly proportions, with a head that bore marks of a vigorous intellect, a countenance of fine expression, and an eye through which flashed the fire of his soul. The reserve of manhood had succeeded to the loquacity of youth, and he was now demure and taciturn, especially on all subjects relating to himself and his future course. He courted retirement, and spent much of the year of his stay at home in his old study, extending his reading and investigations on various subjects; and what time he was not there he was out among the groves, hills and ravines, of his beloved Mapleton. All the places endeared to him by recollection he visited over and over again; — Forest Point, where Tooney was

exhumed; the ruined house which the Harcourts had occupied during their short stay in town, thinking of little Sarah, of whom he had never heard since their departure, and dwelling fondly on the associations of days now departed never more to return. To him it was enchanted ground. Occasionally he would enter the circle of former friends, but always with a brow clouded by care, and a look of anxious thoughtfulness. The part he took in conversation appeared to cost him an effort, and he contrived to elude inquiry in reference to his own purposes or prospects. He was deeply meditating his future plans in life.

Thus time passed till the second autumn after his return home, when he gave his parents to understand that he should adhere to a secret but long-cherished purpose of entering the ministry. Unpropitious as he felt his relations to be as the son of a drunkard, and galling as that thought was to his towering spirit,— a thought which had done more than anything else to keep him back so long,— still, the obligations to the ministerial calling had so wrought themselves into his convictions, that he could frame to himself no sufficient excuse for turning to a secular occupation. Messrs. Holliston and Littlefield were called in to advise as to what steps should be taken in the case. The former gentleman advised that, with the approval of his church, Charles should betake himself at once to some retired place, and there exercise his talents in teaching the people religion, in visiting from house to house, in promoting schools, and otherwise advancing the cause of piety and intelligence. He said "that a professional education for such a calling should not be sought till the heart had been fully tested and the ability proved; that the haste with which young men, of feeble capacity and no intelligent obligation to the work, had of late years been placed upon a course

of education for which they had no fitness, had filled the pulpits with a mere apology of men, educated asses to bray nonsense by rule; and that there were hundreds of uneducated farmers and mechanics, whose piety and talents fitted them to go directly from their secular occupations into the pulpit, and do there a far more effective work. Even ability," he added, "is no guarantee of success in a work which depends so entirely upon a certain moral and spiritual fitness, which no education can impart, and no process can satisfactorily ascertain but that of actual trial. Besides, there is no training that your son can enjoy which promises so much to himself as an actual contact with human ignorance and misery, with a view to their alleviation. This, if anything, will school a young man's heart and character, to act as the cure of souls. Practice makes perfect."

Mr. and Mrs. Douglass fully concurred in these views, nor were Mr. Littlefield and his church backward in giving their consent. Forestdale was selected as the scene of Charles' present efforts. The people were exceedingly destitute, and he opened schools among them, both secular and Sabbath, and expounded to them the word of God. They were poor and miserable, and therefore the more readily flocked around him as their spiritual adviser. To a young man for years accustomed to literary society and pursuits, the seclusion of a hidden and unlettered neighborhood is sombre and oppressive. Some alleviation may be found from books; or, if he be a spiritual man, from the communion of devout hearts. But young Douglass had not gone there for the sake of books; nor was his mind sufficiently relieved of the corroding anxieties which had so long preyed upon him and his family, to be happy in communion either with himself, his fellowmen, or his God. He had no power to resist the current of

unhappy sensations, which, from the one ever-present, ever-corroding idea of being a drunkard's son, had worn for itself a channel through his heart.

Those who describe the red, bloated face, the watery and inflamed eye, the diseased and trembling frame, the ruined character and blighted fortune, of the drunkard himself,— or even the withered plant of conjugal love in the bosom of his wife, or the wretchedness of her infant group,— as evincing the worst evils of intemperance, have but gross and imperfect views of the subject. It is after this group have grown to manhood, to take their place in society as young ladies and gentlemen, that the climax of the damning process is reached. Then that wife feels over again all her pangs, with added strength, in the disgrace of her children; while they, fluttering for a time with the vain endeavor to rise above the domestic infamy, too often settle back into the habits of the father, and drown an incurable sorrow in the maddening cup which had produced it.

These feelings of disgrace and infamy, at being a drunkard's son, acting upon a soul of towering ambition, and too little disciplined to restraint and control, made the bosom of young Douglass more desolate than any hermit's cell, more tempestuous than a chaotic world. He rather yielded himself to them, and found a dismal pleasure in brooding over his pains. He spent much time in the thickest of the forests, uttering ejaculations of anguish and woe, and struggling for relief, but without power to surmount his mind-consuming grief. And, when kept within doors by the howling of autumnal storms, he would lie prostrate, hours together, upon the floor of his room, wishing for death as the end of a disgraced and burdened life. His nerves were so excited and enfeebled, by the severity of past studies and conflicts, and by a morbid

sense of the social disadvantages under which he labored, that he could not sleep; longing for a fever, or some organic disease, to interrupt the course of those excruciating thoughts, which he feared would otherwise drive him to madness. Though he continued his services among the people as usual, so that they saw no signs of the fearful tempest raging within, except in his haggard and emaciated looks, of which they took little notice, thinking them the badges of his profession; yet, whenever he came before them, it was with a sense that they were all thinking "there comes the drunkard's son," and with a certainty that he could not face them long enough to say a word. Though there was no real cause for all this in anything said or thought among the people, yet his mind had become morbid on a subject which had so long corroded within, and there was no such thing as shaking off the incubus. And, indifferent as might be his public efforts, it always seemed to him a matter of surprise, when he closed, that he had done as well as he had. Speaking had the effect, for the time being, of diverting his mind from its horrid ideas.

He became, at length, convinced that he must either sink into nothing, and disappoint the hopes of his friends, or else make an effort to dismiss a subject which had taken such hold upon him. He resolved on the latter course; bethinking himself that no blame could attach to him on account of his father's habits, and that, as to the disgrace brought upon him as a consequence of them, *that* might prove a salutary thorn in the flesh, to gain the ends of moral discipline, and increase his usefulness. He found it easier to think this, however, than to repair the breach upon his mental and nervous constitution which had been already inflicted. As a curative process, therefore, he resolved upon three things: first, visit-

ing the afflicted, and doing the offices of humanity; second, taking frequent rides on horseback; and third, trusting more implicitly in his heavenly Father, for the management of his domestic sorrow and all its consequences. The first made him familiar with these who had far greater causes of sorrow, and taught him reconciliation by the contrast; the second improved his health and spirits; and the third shielded him under a higher power, insomuch that, under this regimen, his spirits soon began to acquire tone, his feelings elasticity, and the roses of youth to bloom upon his cheek, and peace and contentment to beam in his eye. The happiness he conferred on others reäcted upon himself, and he found in the improving condition of the people unmingled satisfaction.

Things went on thus till late in October, when, the day being unusually fine, he continued his morning ride full ten miles from his lodgings. Here the country dropped down to a level full sixty feet lower, to which, as he descended, he saw the smoke curling up among the tree-tops on his right, while directly before him a magnificent plantation opened upon his view. The smoke, he soon saw, came from a spacious mansion, with piazzas encircling it, and an observatory surmounting the top, which commanded a view of the whole plain in which the plantation was located. The lanes, fields, and houses of the tenantry, were arranged with reference to the mansion, immediately around which were original forest-trees in clusters, with cleared spaces between, occupied by lawns and gardens. As the morning was mild and misty, the smoke from the houses of the distant tenantry was slowly rising, circling round and round as it mingled with the pendent clouds. Flocks of sheep and herds of cattle were performing their morning gambols over the rich pastures which extended across the ample circumference of the plain.

Douglass was enraptured at the view, and, midway of the declivity, he sat, poised in his saddle, gazing upon this enchanting picture of country life.

Fatigued with his ride, he could not resist the temptation of alighting at the base of the hill, and paying his respects to the family at the mansion, in order to acquaint himself more fully with the possessors of such a beautiful domain. Fastening his horse at the gate which opened upon the lawn that extended back to the mansion, a distance of about fifteen rods, he walked leisurely along between rows of mast-trees, which were dropping their ripe fruit in great abundance. As he arrived opposite the garden, he heard the soft tones of a female voice saying, "John, be careful, man! don't break my roots!"

"Indade, miss, it 'll pain me much to destroy these pretty flower-bearers," said a gruff voice, in Hibernian accent.

"Charming! excellent!" added the female voice. "All safe! You have done right well, my good fellow; not a root is broken. It would be a pity not to use well what adds so much beauty to our home."

"An' faith," said the man, "I 'm thinkin' as much."

By this time Charles had reached a point to see the actors in this dialogue, who he found to be a laboring man, with a basket of bulbous roots, and a young lady, who seemed to be superintending their removal to a place of safety for the winter. The lady, in a neat morning dress and straw hat, strongly impressed him with an idea of extreme beauty, gentleness and serenity. Her complexion was so clear, her eye so soft and yet so brilliant, her form so sylph-like and symmetrical, her expression so sweet and intelligent, and her movements so natural and graceful, that Douglass stood entranced,— more charmed by the tenant than he had been

by her home. At that instant she caught his eye, and he nodded a respectful "good-morning." She replied by a slight inclination of the head, a little confused at his unexpected appearance.

"Excuse this interruption, madam," said Charles. "In taking a morning ride, I have been so much attracted by the uncommon beauty of this place, that I could not resist the temptation to a nearer inspection."

"Sir, you are quite welcome at Terracegreen," said the lady.

"Your family must have settled here at an early period."

"No, only a few years ago."

"But how should it be possible in a few years to raise a wilderness to such a pitch of cultivation?"

"My father, sir, had tenants on the farm several years before we occupied it ourselves; and, having a great fondness for rural pursuits, he has done much since he came to beautify the place."

"Your father must be a man of taste. I see on this plantation what, I confess, has before occurred to me as a picture of imagination, occasional remnants of forest-trees in clusters over the cleared parts, to diversify the scenery. The axe, as a general thing, you know, takes all."

"My father took the idea from English scenery. He was travelling abroad when our tenants began to clear the farm, and he wrote, ordering them to leave no space large enough for a field bare of these shady clusters."

"How opportune the idea! They are a great ornament to the place."

"They are more; they relieve the heat of summer to our horses, cattle and sheep."

"To be sure," replied Charles; "and *they* are entitled to have their comfort considered, as well as our own."

"Yes, I see not how we can answer it to our consciences to be neglectful of them, when they are so faithful in serving us. Their approach to us is far nearer than ours to the supreme Benefactor on whom all alike depend."

"Such sentiments are the brightest ornament of your sex and your person," replied Charles, with an impulse to be complimentary without knowing how.

"The right of the thing is more to me than the ornament," she said, a little doubtful as to the motive of his remark.

"No doubt, no doubt," added Douglass, blushing with apprehension, lest he had too freely betrayed his admiration of her person.

"Will you please walk in, sir?" she said, moving towards the house.

"I thank you," said Charles, following; "I am too much charmed by the place and its occupant to refuse such a request."

"Compliments are cheap things," she added, still doubtful whether he was in earnest.

"You mistake, if you think me capable of using them insincerely. What I feel I speak. Pardon the freedom in a stranger."

"Never mind," she replied, stepping upon the balcony, where they were met by the melodious notes of a canary. "Tiny, sweet Tiny! how soft and cheerful is your morning song! You are happy,—happy, and love to make us so."

"You are fond of birds?"

"Who is not fond of birds?"

"Did it never strike you as cruel to deprive them of liberty?"

"Perhaps so," said she thoughtfully. "Still, habit makes confinement second nature to them, and I believe my Tiny as happy as any bird in his native forest;" to which the bird seemed to assent by pouring forth one of his most joyous strains.

"If he is not, it will not be for lack of an attentive mistress."

"True, I could not neglect him. It would be an ungrateful return for the pleasure he affords. Be seated, sir," said she, showing him into the parlor.

"No, no, I must return; I have already exceeded my time."

"Sir, we cannot consent to your leaving so abruptly. Our breakfast is this moment on the table. I will call papa; he will be happy to speak with you."

With that she ran to call her father, while Douglass glanced around the room in which he was seated, and was struck with the air of neatness, simplicity and elegance, which seemed to preside over all he saw. In a few moments she returned, with evident discomposure at learning that her father had been called out on public business, and would not breakfast at home that morning.

"I am surprised to find myself deserted by my father," she said, upon returning; "he has left me to breakfast alone."

"I think, my kind hostess, you must now excuse me; and, with your leave, I will call again, and make the acquaintance of a father whose daughter has inspired me with so many sentiments of gratitude."

"Gratitude! no, if you do not breakfast with me."

"Well, since *you* insist upon it, I must yield."

The breakfast-bell now rang, and, rising, she conducted him to the breakfast-room. Douglass was surprised to find no

one at the table but the young lady and himself, and remarked, "Your family is small."

"There are none in it but my father, myself and the servants."

"No mother?"

"My blessed mother went to another and better world when I was a child, and my little brother died about the same time."

"Indeed, and not lonely?"

"No; habit has taught me to find company in myself, — not the best, it is true, but such as I contrive to reconcile myself to."

"I should doubt whether you could find better," said Douglass.

"You seem determined to flatter me," said the young lady; "but what do you think of my father, who has been here entirely by himself during the years of my absence at school?"

"I am no flatterer," replied Charles; "but, if this were my house, and I your father, it would require more philosophy than I have to endure the absence of such as you are in my view."

She blushed at this speech, and even Charles was confused; for his language never before took a complimentary turn toward a young lady. But his character partook too much of simplicity and impulse to admit of his disguising his feelings. Besides, the freedom of conversation on both sides arose from a sort of home-feeling between them, — from a secret impression of previous acquaintance. The cases are not infrequent in which a familiarity at once arises between those who are linked by no tie of recollection, because the heart's facility of reviving former impressions is greater than the

mind's power of tracing the continuity of its ideas. This illusion is sometimes produced by the similarity of the new acquaintance to an old and tried friend, leading strangers upon a first meeting to glide into a familiarity at which they themselves are surprised. There may also exist between persons in nature such a fitness of taste as to lead to this result, in spite of calculation and endeavor to maintain greater reserve. Love at first sight is by no means impossible.

Breakfast concluded, Charles, about to take his leave, remarked, "When shall I have the pleasure of another such entertainment?"

"I was about to ask you to call and make my father's acquaintance, but — but — "

"O, I see; my promptitude in forestalling your invitation embarrasses you. I ask to come for *your* sake, and you was about to invite me for your *father's* sake. Perhaps some third person might interfere with *my* request, but none can object to *yours*."

"It is enough that the parties directly concerned are satisfied," she replied; "let others take care of themselves. When will you come to see both my father and *me*, if you please?"

Taking out his memorandum-book, Douglass looked a moment along the line of his engagements, saying, or rather thinking abstractedly, "This is Monday; well, Thursday, — Thursday is a great way off,— will Thursday morning please you?"

"Yes, if you will arrange to pass the day with us."

"A day! Would it were a week, in such an Eden, with such an Eve!"

"O, you mock me by your flattery!"

"You will never say that, when you are better acquainted

with me; so I must trust to my future good behavior to redeem my character. Good-morning."

"Good-morning," she replied, with an expression of simplicity and innocence that would have given him pleasure, but for the feeling which it awakened of the gulf that existed between him, a drunkard's son, and one of a character and associations which seemed to him so far above his own. The disadvantages of such a relationship are never so keenly felt as when they come in to crush the heart's fondest hopes and aspirations. We can endure its poverty, the scorn and neglect of society on its account, and almost any other of the accruing disadvantages, better than the barriers which it interposes to an affair of the heart.

CHAPTER XI.

THE INIQUITY OF A FATHER VISITED UPON HIS SON.

"My spirits, as in a dream, are all bound up.
My father's loss, the weakness which I feel,
The wreck of all my friends, or this man's threats
To whom I am subdued, are but light to me,
Might I but through my prison once a day
Behold this maid." — SHAKSPEARE.

THE impression of previous acquaintance, which was the real cause of the freedom of the foregoing interview between Charles Douglass and the young lady therein introduced to the reader, existed in both their minds as the relic of a forgotten dream. But, with all their efforts, they could not revive the recollection of each other. A mysterious enchantment hung round this new acquaintance in the mind of Douglass, and he

would sit musing for hours together, like a man upon whom some half-formed conception of future good has begun to dawn, and he dwells upon it continually, lest the fugitive idea should escape, and merge him in his former darkness. When Thursday came, he was up earlier than usual, and mounted his horse with more than his wonted elasticity. Even the noble horse seemed to partake of his enthusiasm,— prancing and neighing, and looking wistfully in the direction of the plantation. A servant was in waiting at the gate to conduct him to the mansion; and, as Douglass advanced up the lawn, he was more than ever struck with the beauty of the place. The rocky defile along the north of the house seemed to render it impregnable against wintry winds, imparting to the whole an aspect of *snug* comfort, peculiarly propitious to a Northern imagination; while the expanding plain that opened to the south was beautifully diversified with groves, meadows, broad acres of green and luxuriant wheat, and all the charms of a highly-cultivated plantation. His horse he delivered to the man in waiting, and, being promptly answered at the door, was soon seated in the parlor. As the daughter had no means of introducing her guest, she thought it prudent to send her father to reconnoitre, who accosted Douglass with "Sir, good-morning; be seated, sir."

"Good-morning," rejoined Douglass. "I was so much struck with the beauty of your plantation, the other day, that I begged of your daughter the privilege of making the acquaintance of its owner."

"Our house is always open to those who deserve our respect."

"In the absence of such desert, I could not hope to command respect from a gentleman of your discernment."

"I harbor no suspicions,— you are welcome," added the

host, at the same time casting upon his guest a searching look; and, detecting the scar left by the deer on Charles' temple, he exclaimed, "Bless me! is this you, Charles Douglass?"

"That is my name, sir; but pray how should you know me?"

"Was you not struck senseless, some years since, by the blow of a deer on your temple?"

"I was."

"Well, have you forgotten the agency which one Harcourt and his daughter had, on that occasion?"

"No, I can never forget it! And you are that person?"

"The same. I should have known more of you, and your family, but that I was called to attend to the building of this house. I believe you saw more of my daughter."

"Mr. Harcourt, you are greatly changed in appearance,—much more corpulent,—and I should not have mistrusted the identity. I felt that I knew your daughter; but she was then a child and is now a woman, and I could not quite recall her. Your man John, too, I thought I had seen; but Irish laborers are so much alike I can never tell them apart. I have been in a maze ever since I was here the other day, but now all is plain. I owe my life, sir, to you and Canaudeh."

"Canaudeh! yes, that 's a noble Indian. I suppose you know that I have him here on my farm?"

"Canaudeh here! I thought he was at Green Bay. What providence has brought him here?"

"He did emigrate, but longed so much for the country of his fathers' sepulchres, that last spring he returned, and was lingering about in the woods of this neighborhood like a man among the tombs, obtaining a precarious subsistence by hunting. I pitied him, and, at the suggestion of my daughter,

offered him a home on my plantation, and a supply from my table. And he has accepted it,—at least, so much of the time as he does not give to hunting."

"Has he learned to talk English yet?"

"He rarely attempts it, though he understands much that is said to him. My daughter, who has come to be of a pious turn of mind, and visits him every week to talk her doubtful notions in his ear, thinks he understands all. But I doubt it; for it is more than I can do."

"Then he has maintained his pledge, I suppose?" said Charles.

"What pledge?" inquired Harcourt, with a sneer which indicated that he knew without asking.

"The pledge of total abstinence. Have you not heard the story?"

"No, no!" said Harcourt indignantly. "I did not think Canaudeh such a confounded fool as to sell his freedom to these cursed fanatics."

"Fool or no fool, it saved him from the fate of his tribe. Every man, woman and child of them had died of drunkenness, directly or indirectly; and the old chief was rapidly going the same way, when he saw the evil, and came under a solemn pledge never to drink another drop that intoxicates, though there was at the time little hope that he would keep it."

"That explains the old ninny's conduct the other day. I said to him, 'Canaudeh, this beer is excellent; will you taste it?' when he stared, and at length said, in his broken way, 'You me not know; fire-water devil, drink and Indian make mad. Me know Indian well. Taste beer, then taste rum, then get drunk, then fight and kill, then in street lie and get sick, then die.' Then he added, with tears, 'My fathers, my brothers, ugh, ugh!'—which means something

beyond my depth.—'No give Indian drink no more!' I thought it queer, but did not understand it before."

"I think you will now confess him a wise man."

"No, he is a fool, and so is any man who has not self-command enough to drink without drinking to his injury."

"Is your daughter at home?" inquired Douglass, desiring to change the subject, and avoid all seeming rudeness to a man in his own house.

"Go, call your mistress," said Harcourt to a servant in waiting. Miss Harcourt soon appeared, and the young couple were formally introduced by the father. A feeling of natural embarrassment came over them at meeting as gentleman and lady, who had previously known each other only as children.

"My little friend, as I used to call you," said Charles, "how little did I suspect, the other morning, that I was breakfasting with you!"

"And I was as much in the dark as yourself, though, I confess, a mysterious impression of previous acquaintance lingered round my mind."

"So I felt, and have taxed my brain not a little to identify you. And Canaudeh too here,—how strange!"

"Yes, Canaudeh, and no more the bloody warrior, but the true Christian."

"That favorite idea of yours, my daughter, is harmless, whatever may be said of its truth."

"You do not deem it impossible, Mr. Harcourt?" said Charles.

"I am no judge in such matters. I leave those to determine them who can. I only say I cannot, and I am no hypocrite."

"Do you not remember Samuel Gilfort?" inquired Miss Harcourt.

"Yes, as great a cheat as ever lived. So think the Mapleton people," said Charles.

"Are you sure of that?" said Harcourt.

"Perfectly sure; as sure as a tree is known by its fruits."

"Well, he has made a great figure in the world," said Miss Harcourt.

"And seems very much improved," added her father.

"What! have you any direct intelligence of him, of late?" inquired Douglass.

"I? Yes," said Harcourt; "I meet him daily."

"What! in this neighborhood?" inquired Douglass, with surprise.

"Yes, in this neighborhood, and several times in this house."

"Is it possible,—Samuel Gilfort in this neighborhood, and in this house recently! Where are his colony, his cosmopolis, his palace, and the possessions he is said to have acquired in the far West?"

"O, I learn he has left them in a prosperous way, for the purpose of relieving himself from the weight of his great affairs. Princes find it necessary to rusticate, to recruit their exhausted energies," added Harcourt, laughing. "Is it not wonderful that he should have the control of twenty thousand hands in building his seat of empire?"

"Wonderful, if true," said Douglass. "I do not believe he has half that number. Stories magnify, like flocks of pigeons, with the extent of their flight. Pray how does he appear?"

"Like a gentleman,— that he does," said Harcourt. "Two or three servants, apostles, or secretaries, attend him. His person has grown into graceful proportions, and his carriage

is manly and dignified. They even talk of him for our next President."

"Our next President!" said Douglass, with a sneer. "Talk of Lucifer as well! Does he drink as much as ever?"

"He is no drunkard, sir; he is always himself; he can stand as much as Alexander the Great, or any of his court. I think the more of him for that."

"Dear father," said Sarah, "how can you speak so? Dress, equipage and good living, have taken off the rough edges of his appearance; but he has the same snaky eyes, and the same sinister look, as ever; and to me he seems more hateful than formerly in his poverty, because I am thinking of the frauds by which he has raised himself to his bad eminence; and because strong drink does not produce in him the same degraded exterior as in some others, it does not prove that its moral or inward effects are any the less abhorrent."

"But what are the peculiar principles on which he has gathered his colonists around him?" inquired Douglass.

"They are a sort of mongrel combination of politics and religion. The first article is: Samuel Gilfort, the great light of the universe. This makes all others satellites, to revolve around him and do his bidding. Then, you have only to picture to yourself the course such a will as Gilfort's would be likely to take, in filling up the outlines of his creed, to understand the whole. That he has the right to control every man's purse would naturally stand second. The rest is made up of a doggerel litany, hypocritical cant, and a round of ceremonies, in the formation of which Moses and Solon, Jesus and Voltaire, the Pope and Mahomet, Washington and Benedict Arnold, have lent their appropriate share of influence. It takes all kinds of bait to catch all kinds of fish. The more

contradictory the compound, the more captivating to the multitude who are born to be the dupes of the designing."

"But perhaps he hopes by his visits to you to make a convert," said Douglass, laughing.

"No, not of *me*, but of Sarah. Me he knows to be incorrigible; but my pretty daughter, as he calls her, he supposes more susceptible in such matters."

"Father, how can you speak of me in such an odious connection?" said Sarah, with an expression of injured feeling.

"Think not, my daughter," said Harcourt, with genuine tenderness, "that I am representing *you*, but *him* of whom Mr. Douglass is so curious to learn. His vile schemes, I know, can never touch you otherwise than with disgust." Breakfast was now announced, and Sarah, taking her father's arm, led him aside, to request that he should ask their visitor to say grace, as she knew, by a woman's instinct, that he must be a clergyman, in fact or in prospect.

"How do you know there is any grace in him?" said Harcourt, facetiously.

"Papa, you know how I delight to please *you*, and do gratify *me* in this!"

"Certainly, my daughter, you shall be gratified." Accordingly the service was politely requested, and as promptly performed. Though Harcourt was an avowed infidel, yet it was his study and his life to please his daughter, whose position was directly the opposite of his own in this respect. No father could be more affectionate or assiduous.

"I admire your selection of a place for building," said Douglass. "It is not uncommon for farmers to perch their houses on the bleak point of the hills, where the winds do battle upon all that comes in their way. I confess the sight of such domiciles freezes me, even in the heat of summer. I

choose to be hid, as you are, under this rocky defile, from those aërial enemies which attack us so fiercely in this climate."

"It is true, sir, I have more respect for the gods of the air, Boreas, Notus and the like, than for all the saints in the calendar. I have made it the study of my life to guard against these princes of the air, by whom my fences are sometimes shattered, and my fields laid waste."

"Well, you have been fortunate in locating your castle."

"Our ideas of comfort," said Miss Harcourt, "take their cast from the climate in which we live. At the South, their houses can hardly be said to be places of protection against anything but sunbeams."

"Yes, *they* want air; *we* want protection against wind and cold," said Douglass. "Perhaps our confinement may be more favorable to civilization, though I confess I often sigh for the velvet atmosphere of those more voluptuous climates. We have retirement and reading, however, to compensate our lack of the freedom of out-door life; and, upon the whole, our condition is most favorable."

"So *we* think; and so thinks the Esquimaux, who wraps himself in furs, and resorts to the snowy caverns of his native land, to spend his six months' winter on oil and seal's flesh, thanking his gods for a country so superior to all others," said Harcourt.

"Custom has, indeed, much to do with our predilections," replied Douglass. "Still, no one can doubt that temperate climates have greater advantages for individual and social elevation than any other. Facts are independent of local prejudices. The things which really ennoble mankind are found for the most part with us."

"How, then, should Egypt, the warmest and most insalubrious country in the world, have been the cradle of European

civilization?" said Harcourt. "Its colonists converted the Greeks from swine to men, and from living on acorns to quaff the generous cup and drink the flowing bowl."

"Do you think the old Egyptians wine-bibbers?" inquired Charles.

"They must have been, or they could not have been an elevated people," said Harcourt. "Where did refinement of sentiment ever grow up without wine?"

"I remember," said Douglass, "the picture of a drunken man among the paintings or hieroglyphics of ancient Egypt, but never till now heard it mentioned as an evidence of refinement."

"Nor does papa think it so, more than Mr. Douglass," said Sarah. "He knows as well as the rest of us that it was not wine, but the Nile, that gave the Egyptians precedence in civilization. That did the work of the plough, spade and hoe, ages before they were invented, which is reason enough for their early advancement."

"Yes, Miss Harcourt, you have the right of it. The Nile was in itself a greater civilizer than all other outward agents. Wine debased the people, and undid the work the Nile had done."

"Two against one," said Harcourt, "proves nothing. There never was a generous people that did not dip deep in the juice of the grape, from old Noah's drunken fit to this day. The old barbarian patriarchs before the flood knew nothing of this drink to cheer both God and man; and hence, the old dolts, what were they fit for but to be drowned? As soon as the race learned from the ark-man how to make wine, they began to shoot ahead; and Ham, stealing the art of his father, went into Egypt, and gave it both wine and a name, as

you know it is called Cham, throughout the Old Testament, after this wayward son of Noah."

"Your reasoning, sir, strikes me as more amusing than logical," said Douglass, laughing.

"Well, you Christians are bound to speak well of Egypt, because it gave you your Moses and your laws," said Harcourt.

"God gave them to us, in spite of Egypt, you mean," said Charles.

"By the way, do you accept Homer's description of Egyptian Thebes as fact, or fiction?" inquired Harcourt.

"What description do you refer to?"

" 'οὐδ' ὅσα Θήβας
Αἰγυπτίας, ὅθι πλεῖστα δόμοις ἐν κτήματα κεῖται·
Αἵθ' ἑκατόμπυλοί εἰσι' διηκόσιοι δ' ἀν ἑκάστην
'Ανέρες ἐξοιχνεῦσι σὺν ἵπποισιν καὶ ὄχεσφιν.' "

"O, father!" said Sarah, mortified by this literary exhibition, "do not give us these barbarous sounds!"

"Well, here you have it in the elegant English of Pope," replied her father, still anxious to maintain his credit for literature:

"Not all proud Thebes' unrivalled walls contain,
The world's great empress on the Egyptian plain,
That spreads her conquests o'er a thousand states,
And pours her heroes through a hundred gates;
Two hundred horsemen, and two hundred cars,
From each wide portal issuing to the wars."

"Really, Mr. Harcourt, you have reserved some time for literature amid the cares of business," said Douglass.

"I remember a thing or two of my youth," said Harcourt.

"I consider this description of Homer a literal matter-of-fact. The present ruins of Thebes prove this," added Douglass.

"Dear father, please excuse my interrupting; but I have an engagement," said Sarah. Her engagement turned out to be with Canaudeh, in fulfilling which she invited Charles to accompany her. She retired to get herself in readiness, and soon returned, followed by a lad with a basket of nice things for their favorite son of the forest, and bringing also two fish-poles, with hook and line, that they might give an idle hour to angling. "You will smile at my apparatus, so unusual in this land of wheat, and cattle, and labor. But I learned to amuse myself in this way at my boarding-school on the Atlantic; and we have a babbling brook abounding in trout on our plantation, where I sometimes spend a leisure hour."

"A happy thought. No better could be imagined. But I am unskilled in business of this kind, and must learn of you."

"Very well; I can teach you to catch trout." Thus furnished, away they flew, leaving Harcourt to his occupations, whose eye followed the airy footsteps of his daughter with all a father's pride and joy. She ran meandering through the shrubbery and lawns of the plantation, while Charles followed with his delicious burden, feeling for once the buoyancy of young spirits, and the delight of an overflowing heart. With all the excellences of puritanic piety, does it not take too little account of the necessity of recreation to health and happiness? Douglass had made a conscience of brooding over his sorrows, as if that might be some atonement for his own faults, or some relief for the unfortunate habits of his father. He journalized, struggled with irresistible emotions, and gave himself to unrelaxed labor and unmitigated asperity, not considering how much he needed a counter-irritant, as the physicians say, or

excitement from another quarter and in another channel, to diversify his emotions, and turn his mind from the horrid ideas which preyed like vampires on his spiritual being. Diversion was his great want; though, alas! it could not cure him, exposed as he was to the officious intermeddling of those who were jealous of his happiness, and bent upon spoiling it, as we shall see, by driving him into, not the imaginary, but the real, disadvantages of being a drunkard's son. Arriving at the border of the unbroken wilderness, Miss Harcourt paused, and, pointing in the distance to Canaudeh's wigwam, she said, "*My* way lies through this forest, which is more convenient than climbing the fences of the open field. But, Mr. Douglass, you must follow hard after me, or you will be lost among the thick trees."

"No, I shall not lose you, unless you vanish, like wood-nymphs, who are said to be rather coy of being seen by men."

"Well, nymph or no nymph, if you lose me, it shall be your own fault."

"I take you at your word,—lead on." With that, she plunged into the gloom of the forest, turning now this way and now that, to avoid the impassable thickets, while he pursued like a hound on the track of a hare, and was pleased to find everywhere the signs of her former footsteps on a similar errand of love.

"Here we are at last," she said, "and Canaudeh within, I see by his dog."

Charles was sensibly affected, as he approached the savage, by the vivid recollection which it revived of that night of nights, when his sable form was first revealed to him amid the nocturnal gloom of the forest, and when, but for his well-aimed gun, he would have died on the spot. Often, in his subsequent days of agony, had he regretted Canaudeh's inter-

ference, as then the panther would have soon put him out of all worldly misery.

"What an humble house," said Douglass, as they approached the wigwam, "for one too good for a palace!"

"None too humble, since it makes him happier than a palace could. Happiness, Mr. Douglass, is what the heart craves; and why should the *reality* be sacrificed to the *appearance?* You know how tenacious the Indians are of this wild mode of life."

"Yes, the white captive who lives long among them becomes also so attached to it as to be with difficulty dissuaded from it. His rude freedom, once tasted, intoxicates the feelings, and not unfrequently makes civilized life tasteless and insufferable."

The barking of the dog had by this time brought Canaudeh to the door, and, seeing his benefactress, his countenance beamed delight; but, upon discovering that she was accompanied by a stranger, he relapsed into his usual reserve, till his practised eye recognized his quondam friend, which Douglass, perceiving, rushed to his arms, when a greeting ensued as tender as between father and son. The savages are remarkable for never forgetting a friend. All the sympathies of the chief's noble soul for once gushed up; and the remembrances which intervened between this and their last meeting, including his painful migration to the distant west and his late return, caused the mingled tears of agony and of love for once to trickle down his brawny cheeks. And — a rare circumstance for him — he exclaimed, in broken English, "Me bliss,"— putting his hand upon his heart,— "Great Spirit me tank; him great good; me see my dead boy; bravo! — him grow like tall pine." The last remark

referred to the manly proportions into which Charles had grown since he last saw him.

"O, Canaudeh, these sentiments of pious gratitude from your lips are like music to my ears!" said Douglass, with emotion.

The noble savage then, stretching up his tall form to its full length, while his long gray locks waved in the wind, laid one hand on the head of Sarah, and with the other pointed to heaven, to signify that there was his destined home, and she was the one who had taught him the way. The first gush of feeling passed, the Indian relapsed into his wonted silence, while Miss Harcourt went on with her usual task of making him understand a portion of God's word. The lesson of this morning was the scene of Gethsemane, which, as she proceeded to unfold it to his view, threw an air of solemn devotion over his features; and, pointing to an uprooted oak, he showed by signs that, as the winds had rudely dealt with that, so he should soon fall, as the only relic of his tribe; — but it would be to find salvation by Him who thus suffered in the garden, and expired upon the cross.

"How my heart bleeds at the injuries which this noble race has suffered at our hands!" said Charles, as they left the wigwam. "We have given them our inventions, without teaching them how to use them. We have given them rum and gunpowder, but without the gospel. Poor fellow! he seems not to be insensible to his wrongs."

"Insensible? No, he feels them keenly. His red brethren also feel them. But our wrong, I think, does not so much consist in withholding the gospel,— because, from the days of their apostle Eliot to this time, we have done much to Christianize them,— but in not living it, in not practising it, in our intercourse with them. Besides, alcohol to a savage appetite

is more certain death than arsenic; for it begets a fatal thirst, which the latter does not. They can taste the one without craving it to their death, but not the other."

"Yes, yes; alcohol has swept from this continent the noblest of all the races," said Douglass with feeling, derived from his own sad experience.

"The severest part of my task, Mr. Douglass, has been to impress Canaudeh with the difference between Christianity and Christians. As soon as he took hold on this, and learned to look at Christ and the gospel as distinct from the white race, his heart was open to the truth and love which shine in the character of our Saviour."

"And the same is true of all men. Christianity has in it the force of universal conviction. It is a religion of love; and love to the soul is what light is to the eye. It subdues the untractable, softens the obdurate, and does more than the fabled harp of Orpheus, which stayed the flow of rivers, made savage beasts forget their wildness, mountains dance to its strains, and charmed the prince of hell into clemency. O! the love of Christianity, as disconnected from the animosity of Christians, is a miracle-worker in the cause of virtue and civilization."

"I like the temperance pledge, Mr. Douglass, but I am satisfied that that alone could not save Canaudeh from a drunkard's grave. Christian principle must come to its support; and mental, moral and social excitements, must supply the place of the bottle."

"But, without the pledge of total abstinence, what can they do? It is healing a wound without extracting its virulence, and thus leaving it to break out again. One daily dram is enough to break the ties of principle, mental excitement, and of social or religious influence. I know it, I know

it, Miss Harcourt; I have seen it over and over again, and never more than in our dear Mapleton, within a few years past."

"What has happened in your town?"

"Ah me!" said Douglass, with a sigh, "I'll tell you another time; it is too long a story before my lesson in fishing."

"Well, here is our babbling brook; but we must follow it down to my favorite place. The fish are too coy for me elsewhere."

"A babbling brook, indeed! How clear! how lively! how beautiful! I wonder not that you love such a brook as this; I should love it now, for its own sake, if I had not loved it before for yours."

"Here, then, in this deep place, I always succeed best; but I resign it to you, for your first lesson, and I will station myself near."

"You are very kind," said he, preparing to drop his line.

"No, stop; here's a drug that Canaudeh taught me to scent the bait with," she said, dropping a little upon his bait. "Now, here, here; disengage your line; do as I tell you, and be sure and move the hook gently, to take the attention of the fish. A moving mouse is far more tempting to pussy than a dead one."

He obeyed orders, while she went a short distance, and commenced angling. In a few moments, out bounded her hook, with a pendent trout, all spotted with gold.

"Charming preceptress, how shall I catch your art?" said Charles, laughing.

"Good reason why you do not catch it; you are all the time looking round at me. You must keep your eyes upon your line, and move it as I tell you."

"This is the hardest part of my lesson. How can I help looking round?"

"You rogue! do as I tell you, and it will be easy," said she, laughing, when out leaped her hook again, with another fish.

"Now, this is too bad! It is not Canaudeh's medicine, but your witchery, that allures the fish. If I were a fish, I am sure I could not help biting such a hook."

"O, you must be complimentary!" she said, with a hearty laugh, in which he joined; and the woods rang with the music of their mirth. "Your motions are not gentle enough, Mr. Douglass. You scare the fish by splashing your line."

"Gentle? How can I be gentle enough for these timid little things? My shadow scares them. They have basked too long in your superior gentleness to endure me."

"You mock me, Mr. Douglass. I do not like your flattery."

"I do not flatter; I speak sincerely; my heart will out."

"If your heart is out, keep your hand steady," she replied, gayly. "There comes another noble fellow! Poor fishy! is n't it too cruel?"

"Yes, Miss Harcourt; my heart is touched. I could n't perpetrate such a deed."

"Then your heart is about you yet, it seems; and, I suppose, would be touched with joy, as much as it now is with pity, if the fish would deign to bite your hook. You must mend your ways before you arraign my cruelty."

"*You* cruel? It's impossible. It is a mercy to the fish to die by such hands. There! I have a bite!" added Douglass, snatching his hook with such violence as to tear it from its fastenings, and the fish fell into the stream.

"Well, let it go. I have a supply for both. One o'clock,"

added she, looking at her watch. "Dear me! it is so late. Come, Mr. Douglass, we must go."

"What! before I catch one fish?"

"O, you will do better next time. You could not be expected to advance far in your first lesson."

"If I do not, it 'll not be the fault of my teacher."

"Perhaps you are more successful in Peter's occupation of catching men," said Miss Harcourt, who suspected Douglass' destination.

"If that should prove true, Miss Harcourt, the cherished hope of my life will be realized."

"No hope could be better. 'He that winneth souls is wise.'"

"This destination — too exalted for the aspirings of one so humble — has, for some mysterious cause, been long before my mind."

"And your education has been directed with reference to it?"

"Not formally, but really. My engagement in Forestdale has no other object."

"Precisely as I suspected. You live there as a teacher of religion."

"Yes; as a teacher of religion, but not with the grave responsibilities of a pastor. This is a calling in which practice must concur with theory, to prepare one for it; and my friends advised this course, to settle my mind, and test my fitness to make myself useful in it."

"Something more than practice or theory seemed to be necessary to the apostles. They had to be endued with power from on high; and are we less dependent in this respect?"

"No, none the less; but how are we to obtain it? that is

the question. By what means did you come to have views of this subject so just?"

"I cannot say that they are so; but I will tell you how I came to think as I do, when you have told me more about Mapleton."

This conversation was terminated on the balcony of the mansion, where they parted, Miss Harcourt to look after her household affairs, and Douglass to muse on the incidents of the day. To a young man of Charles' habits and unhappy domestic relations, nothing can be conceived more invigorating to head, heart and health, than these hours of rural relaxation, in such society. When he was alone, his dreary, soul-consuming years came peering up to his view, like the dashing wreck from which the storm-smitten sailor has escaped, with the loss of all but his life. But, alas! there is no repose to a drunkard's son. The more he felt himself becoming interested in this new and delightful acquaintance, the more he feared the effect of having his father's character known. It was a sun-dog to breed a storm, and not a rainbow to harbinger a clear sky, that seemed to lure him on.

Dinner was soon announced, and Douglass met father and daughter again, at table. Health lent its charms to her person; exercise in the open air made her spirits elastic; piety overcast her with grace and loveliness; and no feature was wanting to complete in her the ideal of a model Christian female. No sombre airs, no whining cant, no incapacity to please or be pleased, no prudish affectation of gravity in dress,—nothing of the kind, to eclipse the lustre of her character; but all was bland, frank, social, cheerful. Little passed between them at table. They were too happy in their own reflections to talk, and too much interested in their anticipated disclosures to fit them for conversation in the pres-

ence of a third person. Harcourt sipped his wine freely, and offered the cup to his guest, but it was politely declined.

"What, Mr. Douglass! — a teetotaller?"

"I never drink anything that intoxicates," replied Charles.

"Excuse me, sir; but that always looks to me suspicious, as if a man did in secret what he was ashamed to do openly."

"It is a suspicion without foundation in my case, Mr. Harcourt, for I never drink at all."

"O, ah, yes, yes; not at all; and the meaning is, I suppose, that nobody else shall drink. That, I believe, is the motive of your teetotal principle."

"We leave every one to do as he pleases; but our conviction is, that the total disuse of intoxicating liquids as a beverage would save the world an untold amount of crime, poverty and wretchedness."

"No doubt, no doubt; but my principle is, that those who are so weak as not to be able to drink without injuring themselves would be in some other way criminal, poor and wretched, if wine were given up. Your teetotalism can't save them."

"Perhaps not all, but the greater part of them."

"But, if I gave up *one* good thing because others abused it, then I may *another;* and where shall I end? I must reduce myself to absolute hermitage; because there is no possible comfort that somebody does not abuse."

"But we do not consider alcohol, as a beverage, among our good things. We are all better off without it. Besides, there is this difference between your wine and our real comforts, that it generates, in a large proportion of those who use it habitually, a dangerous appetite, which is with difficulty controlled, and which, when indulged, leads to the greatest evils of which flesh is heir. It alienates the reason; which cannot be said of our real comforts."

"A precious little reason does it alienate; for the fools who use it in that manner have no reason. They are not worth saving. I would not give up my wine to save as many as you could shake a stick at."

"Dear father," said Sarah, "you *speak* more than you *mean*. You have a tender heart, and would make great sacrifices to render the miserable happy, I know."

"Certainly, certainly, my daughter; but the thing is, to be convinced that giving up my wine would have this effect. Nobody but a fanatic would ever have thought such a thing."

Sarah was everything to her father, and he, apart from his infidel and worldly views, was everything to her that a daughter could desire. It was his life to please her, the image of that dear departed one who was ever present to his view, and whose influence, but for his unfortunate drinking habits, might have elevated him to the same spiritual hopes which greeted her in her death. But this habit, though never indulged to the extent of what the world calls intoxication (which he despised more than most men), kept his moral feelings in a disguised state, and he did not reason nor feel on religious subjects as he probably would if the bane had never entered his blood.

Dinner ended, the young couple sought retirement to complete their explanations. It was one of those warm days of November that pass for Indian summer. The autumnal flies were sporting in the sunbeams in clusters like moving aërial pyramids, the second-growth lettuce and spinage were expanding their green leaves in the garden, the cricket was singing his monotonous ditty, the flocks and herds were cropping the mown grass, and all was serene and lovely, like the old age of a well-spent life.

"O, Mr. Douglass, I must take you to our spring arbor,

the loveliest spot on the plantation!" exclaimed Miss Harcourt.

"Do call me Charles, Miss Harcourt. I have had it at my tongue's end to say this, all day; *Mr. Douglass* is so stiff!"

"I should make a fine figure calling you *Charles*, when you this moment called me Miss Harcourt. Call me Sarah, and try the effect of example before you correct me."

"Agreed, Sarah, sweet Sarah! that has always been a favorite name to me. I called you so during those happy days of our childish acquaintance."

"Here we are at Spring Arbor. How do you like it?"

"Delightful! — a perfect Elysium! I never before imagined a spot of earth so beautiful." Nor was the guise of fancy necessary to extort this confession. A little west of Mr. Harcourt's house, the rocky defile curved round to the north, so as to form a semi-circular space begirt by a natural wall, like the intersected half of an amphitheatre, it being from the plain below to the level of the country above the rocks full sixty feet. The open side of the semi-circle looked to the south-west, so as to command a full view of the descending sun of autumn, while in its bosom gurgled up from the cavity of the mountain a copious spring of pellucid water, which formed itself into a pond of a hundred yards in circumference. Between this pond and the rocky defile on the north side of it Mr. Harcourt had planted a vineyard, the ample tendrils of which stretched themselves over the trees, shrubs and artificial supports, so as to form a spacious arbor covered by a thick vegetable awning, and looking out upon the glassy surface of the fountain, which he had peopled with a great variety of water-fowl.

What may seem extraordinary, the young couple, who

thought themselves alone, were not so, but in the presence of a third person. That person was no other than Samuel Gilfort, the skulking serpent, who, from motives which will hereafter appear, gladly availed himself of the opportunity to learn the probable tendency of an acquaintance so purely accidental as far as the parties were concerned, which could have as yet no other motive than that of the pleasure they felt in each other, as the gushing up of their childish recollections. If there was anything beyond this, it must be set to the account of a certain fitness of person, taste and character, which interference might be expected to develop rather than repress. Whether this eavesdropping was from accident or design, on the part of Gilfort, is not a well-settled question. He had been that morning gaming in a contiguous forest; and, it is said by some, had returned late and sat down to rest himself under the shade of a rock enclosed by vines and shrubbery back of the pool, and would have escaped when he saw the young couple enter the arbor, if he could have done it without exposure; — but, as he could not, he laid still, where he could see and hear all that passed, without being himself detected. Others affirm that he had been cognizant of Douglass' previous visit, and that he took this clandestine method to ascertain whether a rival was likely to spring up to his own fondly-cherished hopes. It is not material to our purpose that we should vex ourselves with the real facts of this singular instance of meddling with other people's business.

Upon seating himself beside Miss Harcourt in the Arbor, Charles exclaimed again, looking out upon the glassy surface of the pool, "A perfect paradise,— an Eden!"

"And I'll be the serpent," whispered Gilfort, inaudibly.

"What is that?" said Sarah, with a start of surprise.

"Nothing but a cricket; I heard a cricket peep," replied

Douglass. "What a beautiful idea of your father to people the pool with such charming tenantry! See how gracefully those swans move their arched necks! How enchanting their aquatic evolutions! Not Joseph's many-colored coat could equal the multiform plumage of these eider-drakes. How elaborately are the minutest things in nature adorned for our use!"

"That young ass thinks he brays beautifully," thought Gilfort, loud enough to excite Sarah's fears again; and she said, "There! what is that? I certainly heard something strange."

"Yes, a cricket again; it is sweet in my ear. Don't you love the music of crickets?"

"I do not object, if it is that."

"Tell me, Sarah, do you not spend much time here?"

"O, yes, I do,— not to look at what you so much admire, but to think of my dear mother, who is now in heaven. The mind has in it imagery so transcending all outward loveliness, that we forget the one in our contemplation of the other."

"Pray, Sarah, what are the facts in reference to your mother? She seems to live in your mind as an ever-pervading presence, and I have always been curious for an explanation."

"The story is short, but full of meaning to an orphan's mind. My mother was to me, while she lived, the oracle of God. Thoughts of God's goodness and Christ's love were interwoven with the lullaby of the cradle and with the stories of the nursery. Nor were her pious assiduities in vain. Her words dropped upon me like the gentle showers on the spring grass. My earliest ideas were ideas of God, my first words words of prayer, and my childish enthusiasm was to

be as good as my mother was,— yea, as good as she represented Jesus to my young imagination.

"She died when I was eight years old; and such a parent's death no child ever witnessed. She was so calm, so sweetly submissive, so charmingly lovely, in her sickness, that my whole soul was wrapped up in hers, and it always seemed to me a miracle of unbelief that my dear father was not won to her faith." Douglass thought within himself that the mystery was fully revealed in the drinking habits of her father. The serpent-cup held him with its charmed eye. It corrupted all his moral judgments. While he despised drunkenness, no drunkard could be more wedded to his cup, or more constantly disguised by it. This accounted for his singular unbelief, amid evidences of Christian truth, in the life and death of his wife, which were overwhelming. What is the more remarkable, was the perfect adoration with which he cherished the memory of his wife, indisposing him to another marriage, and rendering him so fond of Sarah from an idea that she was like her mother. But still, all this mighty array of Christian domestic influence was more than counterbalanced by the irresistible incantation of wine. These thoughts passed through the mind of Charles, though delicacy restrained the expression of them.

"It was midnight," continued Sarah, "when my blessed mother breathed her last. At her request, I was awaked an hour previous. When I came to her bedside, she said, 'My sweet Sarah, your mamma is dying!' I sobbed as if I would break my heart. 'My tender daughter,' said she, 'come once more to your dear mamma's arms.' With that, the nurse set me on the bed by her side, and she clasped me in her cold arms, imprinted the kiss of her clammy lips upon my cheek, and said, 'O, Sarah, my darling child, remember

your mother died a Christian. She loved Jesus. She prayed to him continually. She trusted his atoning blood. Remember your mother said her dying hour was the happiest of her life. Yes, full of happiness, and full of hope. There is no happiness, and no hope, without holiness, my darling daughter. I leave you in God's hand. I know He will take better care of you than your mamma could. I have his promise. I can trust him. My breath is short,' she added, panting. 'I am away,—I am away! Angels beckon me. Jesus smiles me into heaven. Glory, glory, glory!' and with her last word her breath was exhaled upon my cheek, her arms still clasping me in the cold embrace of death."

Gilfort, moved by this recital, could not restrain his tears, ejaculating, "Sweet! — beautiful! — divine! Now I feel the charm of innocence. O that I had been born to a like inheritance! Cursed training! — incurable habit!" Steeped as he was in infamy, born to a money-digging, whiskey-drinking, night-walking inheritance, still his heart had its tender points. Whose has not? The evil spirit of alcohol, indulged from youth, with habits in other respects to correspond, is enough to make a fiend of any man. "My father," continued Sarah, "looked upon the scene in tearless anguish. He felt too much to weep. Since that I have been his bosom friend. His love to me, I sometimes fancy, arises chiefly from his idea that I resemble my mother. O, Charles, I can never forget that scene! It made me — what shall I say? — a child of faith. Faith gives substance to unseen things, rests upon the word and providence of God, and peoples the spirit-land with living forms of light and love. Were I rudely visited with the trials of life, I know not how they would affect me. But ours is a faith that overcomes. Greater is He who is for us than all they that can be against

us, and I will not yield to fear. Still, faith is a delicate plant, and must not be rudely handled. When once broken, it is hard for it to send forth its shoots."

"That is it," replied Charles; "break it, and it cannot bloom again. Mine is broken, broken by sorrow, broken by wrong,— wrong in myself and others,— broken by a burden of our Mapleton history which it was too weak to sustain. How shall I make it green and blooming again?"

"Pray, what has happened in Mapleton? I have a dear recollection of the place, having passed one year there while our house was building."

Douglass here detailed the facts in reference to the groggery and its effects, which, especially that part which concerned his own father and the Durham family, perfectly appalled her. The part of the story that concerned the money-diggers exasperated Gilfort almost to madness, as he had a great interest to stand well with the Harcourts; and he would have pounced upon the young couple at once, dagger in hand, but for the hope of sweeter revenge on Douglass, and even of success with Miss Harcourt, by some future turn of fortune's wheel.

"Charles, your case is not so bad as you think," said Sarah. "No, no,— it admits of hope. Faith can conquer difficulties even great as these. Dear, dear Mrs. Durham! I remember her well. I, too, was her Sunday-school scholar for a short time. A perfect gem of a woman. But it is a gem better fitted to shine in heaven than upon earth. The Wisest and Best saw this, and took her home in a manner so shocking to our feelings. The dark picture has a bright side to the eye of faith. It is spanned by the bow of hope. Charles, you will conquer all your difficulties, and rise yet to

a higher and serener life. It is good to wear the yoke in one's youth."

The tones in which this was said were so soft, so gentle, so unaffected, and, withal, so musical, being sustained also by a demeanor that seemed such a genuine reflection of heavenly light, that it infused new life and hope into the petrified heart of Douglass. He sat for a moment, buried in deep thoughtfulness, and then, half unconscious of what he was saying, he broke forth into a passionate exclamation to the following effect:

"O for such a friend, to be the constant prompter of my faith, the healer of my woes, the light of my erring reason, the restorer of my wrecked life!" and, seizing Miss Harcourt by the hand, passionately, he added, "Will you be all that to me?"

"Hands off! hands off!" muttered Gilfort, "or I'll be the death of you! Take off the checks of my conscience! convert me into gall! steep me in malice! let not relenting sympathy hold me back!" meanwhile flourishing furiously a poniard which he always carried about his person. But, as usual with him, wiser counsels prevailed, and he was content to bide his time of revenge. His mutterings and motionings, however, excited so much alarm in the young couple, that, choosing the better part of valor, they escaped, without any clear idea as to the cause of the commotion.

It was arranged at parting, that evening, that Douglass should soon visit the plantation. In this he was disappointed by the increasing demands upon his time among his people. He visited the schools, did what he could to procure for them suitable teachers, excited the emulation of the pupils by means of prizes, encouraged the establishment of libraries, took pains to excite a taste for reading, formed a temperance

society, and was the means of reclaiming numbers to sobriety, and, at the same time, ministered to the spiritual edification of the people. He had frequent momentary interviews with Miss Harcourt, as she now became one of his hearers, it being the first and only religious meeting at all accessible to her new-country home. She even taught a Bible-class, and gathered around her the principal young ladies of the town, over whom she exerted a happy influence. She doubted the propriety of this step at first, lest it should afford food to scandal, and consulted Douglass on the subject.

"Scandal would soon starve on such food," was his reply.

Her father was the only obstacle that remained, but this was removed by his obliging reply to her inquiry on the subject.

"Yes, teach the misses anything,— conic sections, an old almanac, or the Bible,— rather than leave their minds a stagnant pool, to breed absurdities. John, and the old grays, and the close carriage, are always at your service, my daughter. Do not think I am going to leave you exposed to the elements, in going to Forestdale, lest you too soon follow your departed mother."

Sarah wept at the kindness of her father, and Douglass could not but honor his parental devotion, whatever he might be in other respects. Thus the two became co-laborers; and it contributed not a little to the success of the work. The social and spiritual affections stand related to each other somewhat like matter and mind, in the constitution of man; the one not being healthy while the other is diseased.

Things went on thus a few weeks, when Douglass paid another visit to the plantation, and came to a formal understanding with Miss Harcourt, conditioned on the father's consent. This was Friday, and he was to be consulted on

the subject the ensuing Monday. As the night was stormy, Douglass did not leave till Saturday morning, when, as he was about to mount his horse, he expressed some surprise to Miss Harcourt that he had not seen her father since entering the house the former evening. Sarah then first awoke to the fact herself, but added,

"I rather think papa has a cold, and deems it prudent to keep his room."

"My dear Sarah, you look depressed this morning. Is it that our destinies have become involved?"

"No; it is the fear of having them divided."

"That's impossible. There is one, at least, who could not endure it. His existence apart from you would not be worth a song."

"We will not indulge unnecessary fears. I see no cause for our thoughts taking such a gloomy turn."

"No, there can be none, if *we* are only sound at heart and fixed in mind. All other sorrows would be more than summed up in the loss of you. A kind Providence, who sees how unable I am to sustain such a load, will not impose it upon me."

"Charles," said she, "I have just received this package of books, which I have promised to distribute among my class to-morrow, and so you may rely upon seeing me early."

"Early, my love!" he added, and so they parted.

The Sabbath came, the class met, and sat looking wistfully at each other; but no teacher came. Douglass was surprised and confounded. He said to the young ladies that Miss Harcourt was no doubt sick, as she had their books, and was fondly awaiting this hour to deliver them. His heart sunk within him, and he could hardly wait till Monday morning for an explanation of the mystery. As soon as it was light, he

was on his way to the mansion. But, lo! he found the shutters closed, the doors locked, and, when he rang, there was no response. He hastened round back of the main building, when he saw smoke rising from the wing in which the kitchen was situated, and met a servant at the door, who told him that Mr. Harcourt and daughter had left, the previous Saturday, to return no more; and that his family were the sole occupants of the house, with which they had been left in charge.

"Where have they gone?" inquired Douglass.

"How d'ye s'pose sich as me knows? They be great folk, that has more housen as one."

"Still, Charles thought some one on the plantation must be able to inform him where they had gone; and he went round to inquire of the tenantry, but found them all as much in the dark as himself. Canaudeh's wigwam was vacant, and he could get no intelligence from that quarter. The failure of supplies from the mansion had probably driven him to the woods in search of game. When Charles reached Spring Arbor, he found the pool ice-bound, the vines encumbered with frozen snow and rain, and it presented altogether a scene of utter desolation. But the winter of his own heart was far more bleak, and howling, and dreadful. "O God! have mercy!" was, for a length of time, the extent of his prayer. Words were a poor relief to his burdened heart and shattered reason. His homeward ride was a journey into the hopeless depth of a polar winter, no more to greet the land of bloom, beauty and hope. "I am doomed,—doomed!" this was all he could utter. His dream of bliss had ended in the rugged reality of pain and despair. He wrote many letters, to learn the location of Harcourt and daughter, to all of which the answer was, "We know positively nothing;" except the one

addressed to Skampton, which was never answered. He examined the published record of passengers to foreign countries, thinking they might have gone abroad; but could meet with no such names. An impassable gulf was between him and his dearest earthly hopes, across which no carrier pigeon brought him a word of intelligence. And what added intensity to his sufferings was the suspicion of its being altogether owing to the reputation of his father, and that he was now beginning to realize his worst fears in reference to the disadvantages of his social position.

CHAPTER XII.

CONSERVATISM OF THE LIQUOR-TRAFFIC.

"Those things which we reverence for antiquity, — what were they at their first birth? Were they false? — time cannot make them true. Were they true? — time cannot make them more true. The circumstance, therefore, of time, in respect of truth and error, is merely impertinent." — JOHN HALES.

THE suspicions of Douglass as to the cause of the Harcourts' escape were not only well founded, but it had been brought about by the man who had done most of all to seduce his father into vice again, and to attaint his Mapleton reputation. The man who had held the cup to his neighbor's lips, in spite of a mother's tears and entreaties, was the first to visit the consequent disgrace upon her children. Not content with the ruin of parental character, he proceeds, with wanton hand, to deprive the children of position in society, and to make them the sufferers for deeds in their father of

which he had been the instigator. How can society longer tolerate such perfidy, such villany? Soon after the Spring Arbor scene, Gilfort imparted the result of his eavesdropping to Skampton; and the latter gentleman took sweet revenge upon his refractory dependant, by sending the following letter to Harcourt:

"SIR: I understand that a young man by the name of Douglass is attentive to your daughter. I know him well; and deem it my duty, as a friend, to inform you that he is a worthless fellow. Besides, his father is a drunkard.

"Your obedient servant,

"MICHAEL SKAMPTON."

How characteristic is this fact! The drunkard-maker visiting his own work upon an unoffending family! Those who had wept bitter tears over the infamy of a father, compelled to suffer over the same in their own persons, and that, too, by the very authors of this infamy! Wisconsin has passed the just law of imposing all charges for the support of criminals and paupers, made so by intoxicating drinks, upon those who deal in the article. But this is not enough. The infamy, as well as the pecuniary loss, belongs to them, and they ought to be made to bear it. Why should this most grievous of all burdens be imposed upon the wife and children of the drunkard, who have already suffered so much?

Herein society is utterly at fault. Those whom it exposes to the danger of fighting its battles it honors and pensions. Their wounds are honorable, and their death glorious. Their wives and children too are pensioned, and admitted to a distinguished position. Processions are instituted to their honor, and their names are emblazoned to posterity on monumental

marble. But how does society deal with those whom it exposes to the greater danger of the licensed liquor-traffic? Alas! their wounds are plague-spots, to warn all to escape them who can. The bloated, crimsoned face, the blood-shot eye, the trembling, tottering step, the filthy, squalid dress, and the relics of a night in the gutter,—these wounds and mementoes of the alcoholic war, which society has waged by its law of license,—are they illustrious? Are they honored by pension, place, position? Are they a passport, in the drunkard's family, to distinguished society? No, no! the drunkard's only procession is a retinue of constables, bailiffs and police-officers, conducting him to prison. His children are sent to the penitentiary, his wife to the poor-house; and none so poor or so mean as to do them reverence. O, unjust and cruel society! why this disparity in the treatment of those whom your laws expose to danger? Is it that men are free to buy or not buy in your licensed hells? But are they not equally free to fight or not fight your battles? Is it that the danger of your hells is less than that of your embattled legions? Directly the contrary is the fact. The United States sacrifices the lives of thirty thousand drunkards annually in the alcoholic war, which it has never done in any of its sanguinary conflicts. The danger to which our liquor-laws expose men is ten-fold greater than that of national warfare. And yet we leave the memory of the drunkard to rot, while that of a fallen hero is emblazoned to all ages. The landlord turns out his drunken customer to die in the streets, and refuses his children an equal position with those whose parents denied him their patronage! Such is the justice of our present liquor-laws and drinking-customs!

While poor Douglass is writhing under the infliction of this lordly rum-factor, how distinguished *his* position! His

enormous gains, especially since the temperance movement had diminished the number of rum-dealers and increased the profits of the poisonous traffic, might be seen in the splendor with which Skampton had surrounded himself. He had selected for his home the right bank of one of our most picturesque and renowned rivers, in the little town of Riverton, which lies so near one of our large cities as to be a suburb,—a delightful one too. He had purchased a woodland domain of many hundred acres, near the centre of which he had built his palace, surrounded by conservatories, gardens and pleasure-grounds. A massy gate and lodge, with bell so contrived as to be rung by the approach of a carriage, to warn the porter to be on hand, were an index to the sumptuous scene. The gate passed, the visitor found himself on a macadamized carriage-way, which wound round and round through a deeply-shaded ravine, rising upward and still upward, enclosed on either hand by forest-crowned elevations and a carpeting of greensward, which droves of deer were quietly cropping, while birds, in great number and variety, were singing in the overhanging branches. This way terminated in an undulating surface of many acres,—a sort of mountain terrace,—on which the house and its appendages were tastefully arranged; and then, back of this terrace, the hill reached a still loftier altitude, on which an observatory had been built, commanding a wide prospect of earth and heaven. Even at the point where the house stood, many miles of the river, with its infinite variety of craft, appeared in perspective like a vast moving panorama. On a lower elevation, in the far-off view, the buildings of Riverton Seminary might be seen, on which Skampton lavished a part of his surplus income, and where he manufactured young men to increase the stock of his reputation and influence.

The house was rural and beautiful in its architecture, and adapted to increase the general effect. First, a porch, suited in its proportions to the magnificent structure; then a hall, broad, long and lofty, terminated in a piazza with fluted columns, the whole breadth of the house, which commanded a view of the river, seminary, and a wide extent of rural scenery, eminently beautiful, from the contrast of land and water, of sails and houses, of steam-cars and steamboats, of hill and dale, of field and forest, and of city and country. Arranged along the hall, on either hand, were library, parlors, breakfast-room, dining-room, nursery, and other receptacles of convenience, ornament and luxury. The second and third stories were in keeping with the first; the house being furnished throughout with Wilton carpets, lofty mirrors, costly sofas, divans and chairs, all indicating a degree of wealth and splendor which princes might envy. The first door on the left opened out of the hall into the library, with a rich collection of books, prints, paintings, statuary, and carved work. This was Skampton's throne. Here he contrived his plans of acquisition,—here he studied out the most successful modes of profiting by human infirmity; and it ought to have been full of death-heads, human bones, bottled tears of widowed and orphan wretchedness, paintings of drunken brawls and bloody riots, with the estimated profit accruing from each to the owner written underneath. Prominent among the group ought to have appeared the Genius of Intemperance, with Sir Christopher Wren's monumental inscription:

Si monumentum queris,
Circumspice.
'If you ask for my monument, look around!'

In this room it was that Gilfort and Skampton met, a few

weeks after the concluding events of the foregoing chapter, and had a consultation as to what should be done to ward off a more stringent legislation against the liquor traffic. After the usual salutations, Skampton inquired, "Pray, Gilfort, where d' ye hail from?"

"From Terracegreen. I have remained there ever since I wrote you last."

"Ay, ay! and had an eye, I hope, to the lovers. Pray, what effect had my letter?"

"Good, good! It was the right medicine. It knocked the disease on the head. It saved an innocent girl from the grasp of a tiger, and laid the tiger himself sprawling. I saw him before I left, and his face was as long as my arm, and black as thunder."

"How so? How did Harcourt worst the fellow?"

"By the better part of valor; he escaped. He swore he 'd be the death of his daughter, before she should marry a drunkard's son."

"What! — left the country?"

"The country of this fellow, where he 'll see him no more."

"That 's enough; it 's all I ask. I am thankful that I did my duty, and saved an innocent family. He is a piece of impertinence, and I 'd sacrifice every cent I have before I 'd see him married to such a wife as Sarah Harcourt. How the fool could think to succeed, drunkard's son as he is, temperance lecturer, college scapegrace, expelled for bad conduct, is more than I can divine. His teetotal pledge is enough to wind him up, with a man of Harcourt's spirit."

"Yes, Harcourt despises him. I stated to him the facts in my possession, and his mettle ran high, that the rascal should presume so far. But he is so controlled by his

daughter that he did nothing till your letter came; and then he was off in a trice, and is to be seen there no more."

"That is a good fellow, Gilfort, and entitles you to a bottle of champagne." Rings, and a servant enters. "Sambo, bring me a bottle of our best."

"To be sure, massa, de berry best,—dat any gemman 'll say," replied Sambo, hastening after the champagne, and soon reäppearing, with bottle in hand.

"Here, Gilfort, drink,—drink freely; you need it, after so much fatigue."

"With you, sir."

"No, no, Gilfort, you know I never drink. I *know* the best, as well as any man; it don't agree with me; we are differently constituted; I never drink."

"What!—yoked to this cut-throat pledge?" said Gilfort, drinking.

"Don't insult me by such a question. I should be in chains with that fanatical device. What madness has seized upon the people? Just as if we are wiser than the hundreds of generations which have preceded us, who never dreamed of its being criminal to take a social glass! I would drink, for there is good cheer in 't, but it always gives me a thumping head-ache, and unfits me for anything."

"Well, I am thankful it has the contrary effect upon me. My head is always clearest, and my heart always best, with a little wine in 't. If I wished to think deeply, feel profoundly, pray sincerely, act coolly, bargain skilfully, and do anything effectively, it would be with bottle in hand," he added, drinking off another glass.

"By the way, we are getting a haul out of our Falls tract."

"Yes, we are just approaching the harvest. We have

had, hitherto, only the premature ears, hardly a specimen of what is to follow. We have there a large village growing into a city. One object I have this way is, to blow up our lots in the Eastern market. To furnish myself with wind, I set the bellows in motion before I left. I got up a perfect rage for buying. I sold the Lion Corner, the other day, for ten thousand dollars, and took pains to have it purchased of the buyer, the day following, for twenty thousand, and the day following that for thirty thousand; and that is a specimen of how things go."

"You made a loss, then, by selling so low?"

"No, not I. I see you don't understand the game. Nothing was paid me, and nothing to those who sold after me. Money is not necessary to get rich in this way. I was never so confounded hard up as now. But, then, we shall reap a harvest in the end. These sales, which I have had duly certified, will tell on Wall-street. The property is not alienated from us by means of them, for the right of soil is secured to us by mortgage. We have a clear title; and when the last purchaser fails, it 'll come back upon the next to him, and the next, till it falls again into our hands, with all its improvements. And, by that time, capitalists abroad will be induced to invest among us, and a flow of gold will set in upon our city, that cannot fail to find its way into our pockets, as the great reservoir. This is between us."

"My affairs are vastly extended, Gilfort; I must have funds out of the concern, or I shall kick the bucket. If this cursed liquor-law should succeed, I 'm a dead man. Then my capital goes to the gutter, and I to bankruptcy. My public houses will become sheep-cotes; my ships in the liquor-trade will rot at the wharves; my distillery-worm will cease its flow; my enormous charities will vanish into air; and I,

a stranded whale, shall be the prey of crows and harpies. This is between you and me, as you say."

"That's the point, the exact point, upon which I have come to talk. First, we must blow up our lots in the market. Then for the battle on the liquor-bill. Your legislature meets here soon, and the contest comes on in due form, and we must be ready for it. That madcap Bludgeon is setting the state all on fire against us, and is to begin his onset here the first of March. We must be ready to knock him in head. If the liquor-bill succeeds here, it will in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and then it will over-leap the Mississippi and invade my colony, where I am manufacturing the article on a large scale. This done, and I might whistle for emigrants; for the great attraction, to those who are annoyed by this Maine legislation, is our freedom to make, sell and drink, what we please. If we do not gain the battle here, we lose it everywhere else."

"Well, what do you propose?"

"I propose that we send out agents enough to array on our side all the wealth, talent and power, which we can possibly command. Then, that we have here in your city a consultation of the principles, arguments, measures and influences, to be used with the legislature to defeat this Maine law. This should take place as early as February, to be ready for the Bludgeon tornado. And then, during his campaign, let our ablest speakers be employed, to hold counter-meetings, to divert public attention, and to pour their hot shot upon his camp. With these plans duly carried out, we shall array on our side an extent of prejudice, passion and interest, that must insure success."

"A capital idea, and I have with me the man to head the agency. Mr. Saphead can drum up more people in a given time than any man I know. Sambo, go call Mr. Saphead."

This gentleman soon appeared, very much out of breath, for the good reason that inward fat had nearly deprived him of breathing capacity. He was a man five feet six, and greater in circumference than in height. His gait was like that of a duck in the mud. We sometimes say of a man that he is the breath of another. But breathing denotes continuity, which Saphead had not. He was rather the puff of Skampton, which he blew off occasionally to serve a purpose. Saphead was the generalissimo of all enterprises requiring money and action; Skampton supplying the one and he the other, so that the two together were the parts of a pair of shears,— and a keener instrument never fleeced the public.

"Saphead, such and such are Mr. Gilfort's plans," said Skampton, detailing to him the particulars. "What do you think?"

"I think two wiser heads do not rest on shoulders, and what you approve I go for," said Saphead, with labored breathing.

"You deserve a drop for that," said Gilfort, pouring out a glass of champagne, which Saphead swallowed with a gusto, it put life into his sluggish corporosity.

"You will then undertake to drum up recruits for the campaign in February and March, will you, Mr. Saphead?" said Skampton.

"I will, sir. I'll go first to all the liquor-dealers, and get a large subscription; for it's money makes the mare go. Then, I'd get every conservative man's influence on our side; I mean yours, as you are men skilled in all matters of law and legislation. They 'll go for us, to a man. Then all the liquor-drinkers — a numerous host — will bring up the rear, with their petitions, to scare the dough-faces into a vote on the right side."

"You understand the thing, Saphead," said Skampton. "We shall need a large subscription to buy over the papers."

At that moment the door-bell rang, and Peter Pegan, Esq., a conservative editor of distinction, was ushered in. "Just in time, Mr. Pegan," added Skampton, detailing the several features of the plan. "Can we rely upon your able and influential journal?"

"That 's the very object of my coming," said Pegan, with an involuntary twist of his meagre person. "The battle waxes hotter and hotter. I have just heard that Bludgeon has set the north and west of the state all in a flame. They have already begun to empty the liquor-casks by mob violence, and are confident of being sustained in their vandalism by the coming legislature. I am prepared to lead off with all my power in favor of law and order; and have come to put you on your guard, and to request you to rally as many as you can to my help."

"You see, my good Pegan," said Skampton, "we have anticipated you."

"Yes, I go to New York this very night," added Saphead. "I'll kindle in the great metropolis a counter-flame, which will consume Bludgeon and all his combustion."

"I'll keep my host here to assail the coming members of both houses," said Gilfort.

"And I 'll help you," added Skampton.

Who has not remarked the conflict of the conservative principle with the genius of change? The Old cannot maintain her hold without resisting the encroachments of the New; and the New cannot rise except on the ruins of the Old. The one looks with jealous concern on her time-hallowed prerogatives; while the other, bearing on her bold front the motto of utter demolition, finds in the antiquity of a thing

sufficient reason for beginning her work of destruction. The one would chain the future within the limits of the past; the other would drive the triumphal car of change over all that is guilty of an origin prior to her own.

These conflicts must go on. There is no avoiding them. We can dispense with neither the one nor the other of the belligerent powers. The one is as necessary to guard whatever is valuable in the past, as the other to introduce improvements. Neither the forms of society, nor the maxims of legislation, nor the institutions of civil government, nor creeds in religion, nor the conceptions of virtue and obligation, nor the arts and sciences, nor anything, in fact, which at all depends upon the faculties of man, is too perfect to admit of improvement. To rectify present defects is as necessary as the preservation of what is excellent.

But, unfortunately, the conservative principle often protects the evil, as well as the good. It is as tenacious of slavery as of liberty, and of a traffic which corrupts mankind as of one which has proved itself the most harmless and beneficent. She is a blind, imperious, and blood-thirsty divinity, whose temple is prejudice, whose altar malignity, and whose victims are the greatest and best of mankind. The Son of God himself, with his self-denying associates, and the martyred reformers, as well as Socrates, Seneca, and a long line of kindred spirits, forced to her shrine, have died to appease her inexorable vengeance. And the genius of change is scarcely less arbitrary and blood-thirsty. A despotism is demolished to make way for anarchy and misrule. The feudal tyrannies are supplanted by the Bonapartean thrones, standing amid the blood and carnage of slaughtered millions; the virtues of defect are followed by those of excess, as the miser is merged in the voluptuary; and thus innovation is as reckless as conserva-

tism is cruel and relentless. Yet change must go on. Wise and good men should understand this, and take the lead in it, instead of leaving it to the intemperate and the lawless.

In reference to Skampton, as a faithful historian we are bound to say that his great error was his ultra conservatism. He was not inherently cruel, nor excessively avaricious, nor capable of an out-and-out fraud; and, as to the government of his own appetites, no man could be more rigorous. But he was so wedded to all existing opinions and usages, as to feel that those who rose up against them were enemies to society, and to be dealt with as such. When poor Mrs. Douglass besought him to interfere to turn away the cup from her husband's lips, he felt that she was some way linked with the temperance innovations, and was to be treated as a disturber of the public tranquillity. Her son's temperance efforts while in college exposed him, also, to the same feeling, and led Skampton to exercise against him the arbitrary power to which his position and enormous gratuities. entitled him. And, as Charles could not be brought to his standard, he must be hurled into the abyss of infamy which his contumacious treatment of so great a benefactor deserved. Hence, the ambition of arbitrary control, natural to a weak mind which had so many things to bolster up its pretensions to power, stands side by side with ultra conservatism, as the key to Skampton's character. We say these things in favor of the man, under the full impression that in nothing is history so much at fault as in revealing motives, and in its inquiries after the ruling passions of the great actors in the world's drama.

Besides, the early life of Skampton was full of mitigating facts, to soften the shading of his character. He was born in a mountain defile of the ancient town of Undercliff, on a farm wedged in by inaccessible ledges, on which his ancestors,

from the early time of the colonies, had sustained a precarious subsistence. He inherited their staidness, early became a member of their church, was scrupulous in little things but careless of great ones, and was as averse to expansion as the rock-bound farm on which he was raised. The deacon, his father, ruled the church, minister and all, or rather his wife ruled it through him; for the Mercury, or rather Mars, was all on her side. Michael was vulgarly called the *tell-tale* of the school under Master Tody, who early conceived a passion for him, and made him his right-hand man. The more Master Tody loved him, the more his school-fellows hated him; and the more they hated him, the more Mrs. Skampton and Master Tody thought he was a genius; and the more they thought so, the more they told him so. Hence Michael began life under circumstances to insure in him a false estimate of himself and of everything around him.

Through the persuasions of Mrs. Skampton and Master Tody, the deacon was compelled, against his will, to send Michael abroad, to try the fortunes of literature. But the thing would not go. Michael would strike his head furiously with his fist, to drive in a thought, or to make it stick after he got it in. But the recreant thought would escape him, after all. He plodded on a few years in this way, till it was found that dulness is a disease not easily cured, when he was put to business, in which he acquitted himself more creditably. Fortune, of which he was always a favorite, perpetrated one of those freaks upon him which introduced him into a widely different field from what he had a right to expect. A maternal uncle of wealth, dying in the West Indies, left the bulk of his property to young Skampton. To this he added still more by his marriage. Hence he had at once large sums to invest, which he prudently distributed

among a variety of objects that brought large returns. From the silks of Broadway to the whales of Kamtschatka, from lots in the city to the new lands of the West, from the sumptuous hotel to the humblest groggery, all shared his attention, and supplied the rills of his wealth. His preference for the liquor business was always decided,— not so much on account of its profits, as his desire to maintain a great principle, which had been acknowledged from Noah's wine-press to this day, he said, but was now assailed and invaded by these fanatical temperance innovations. His wealth had grown upon him, till his annual income had risen to thirty or forty thousand dollars.

Still, Skampton was moderate, lived with simplicity, was as unassuming as one under his circumstances could well be; and his homestead investment was made more with reference, he said, to the rise in its value, and the greater means he should thus have in the end to do good with, than to any ideas of personal luxury or splendor. What had done most of all to delude and debase him was his falling into the hands of flatterers, who desired to divide with him the spoils of his wealth. A man with money is like a king in the midst of his courtiers,— befooled for the public good. He was never approached save with hat under arm and head doing obeisance, and was daily surrounded by a class of men who sought money from him for this, that, and the other charity; and who, to accomplish their purpose, would make him believe that the hope of the world, in these days of innovation, was wrapped up in him and in his purse. A mind weak, prejudiced and compressed, like that of Skampton, was just the one to drink down the delicious bane, and suffer from it the worst imaginable consequences. He was liberal, and gave very largely; but manifestly not as a gratuity, at least in

the feeling and motive by which it was dictated, but to buy influence, and create in as many as possible the obligation to do and think as he wished, and to bow down to his overwhelming power. Other rich men invested to bring a return in kind; but he, in reputation and influence. The social supremacy of the Honorable Michael Skampton cost him thousands a year. How much more a gift is money thus bestowed than in buying lands or stocks? It was the system of coërcion which he employed with young men dependent on his bounty that involved him in a quarrel with Charles Douglass. That young gentleman had too much spirit to submit to his dictation, and too much reason to detest his alcoholic traffic to receive his benefactions.

CHAPTER XIII.

WINE AND WITCHCRAFT.

"Be 't whiskey gill, or penny-wheep,
Or any stronger potion,
It never fails, on drinking deep,
To kittle up our notion,
By night or day." — BURNS.

"For, if the devil may form what kind of impression he pleases in the air, why may he not far easier thicken and obscure so the air that is about them, by contracting it straight together, that the beams of any other man's eyes cannot pierce through the same to see them?" — KING JAMES I.

THE parties in consultation at once set about their work. Pegan's columns flamed with articles against the Maine law. A hundred inferior sheets lighted their censers at his altar.

Dolorous wailings resounded on every hand against oppression, invasion of the rights of trade, the folly of decreeing what a man shall drink, the impossibility of carrying out such a bill, priestly interference, malignant fanaticism, legislating against all precedent since Noah began the wine business, the ruin of fortunes to those whom the present laws had drawn into the liquor traffic, conflict with constitutional law which entitles a man to trial by a jury of his peers, and much more in the same line. Peal after peal of Pegan thunder resounded through the land, reverberating from hill to valley, and from mountain to plain. The gathering lawmakers were taken all aback, and dared not move to the right or left, at the peril of their popularity. Those who had obtained their election by the pledge to support the Maine law could not stand against this volleyed thunder of Pegan's pen, and covered themselves from danger under silence, absence, or any subterfuge they could invent. Meantime, Saphead had swelled his golden accumulation to many thousands, at the expense of the liquor-dealers, to flood the country with documents, to hire public-sentiment makers to exercise their function all abroad, and to buy influence in any form under which it might be offered in the market. Skampton plied his arts of personal suasion with the members of the legislature in detail, and did most effective execution; while, on the other hand, Bludgeon and his host waxed hotter and hotter, more and more numerous and powerful, and both the Senate and Assembly were deluged with petitions in behalf of the Maine Law, which they dared not grant, and yet feared to resist. They were literally toads under a harrow, not knowing which way to hop.

Necessity knows no law. This poor Gilfort found, to his cost. He desired to lead off his division, and stand foremost

in the impending battle, but lacked the sinews of war — money. The funds he brought from the far West were gone. His late windy speculations yielded no supplies. There were delicate considerations against looking either to Skampton or Saphead, in this exigency. The former gentleman he knew was hard up, and to draw on the latter's purse would be submitting to a charity pension. No, no; he must appeal to his wits, which, when duly sharpened by the "O, be joyful," had never failed to coin the needful out of something, or nothing. He had lodgings a little out of the city with one of his creatures. He never failed to have around him this kind of animals, — a class of men to whose conscience he was the all-in-all, and whom he could rely upon for any dirty service to which he might send them. His host was as destitute of the needful as himself; but another man near by, — a Dutchman, by the name of Roderick Dobson, who had once been one of his creatures, but had fallen away through an over-love of managing his own purse, instead of leaving it for Gilfort to finger, — he knew abounded in money.

Gilfort, therefore, applied to Dobson for the favor of a loan, proposing to secure him with his Falls property, or in any way he should ask. "I an't able, anyhow, to give you the money," said Dobson, with a grin which revealed a sparse supply of teeth, and a shrug of his round, Dutch shoulders, which betrayed the strength of his hold upon the fruit of his labor.

"What! ten per cent. and good security nothing to you, Dobson? Your money, at that rate, will earn more than you can."

"It arns more in my hand, where I sees it, and knows where it is."

"Well, if you won't accommodate me, I'll render good for

evil, and pay you off with a drink of capital whiskey, just sent me from my distillery in the west," said Gilfort, taking out of his pocket a little bottle full of the intoxicating poison. Dobson's eyes glistened at the sight, for he was a man given to strong drink, though too covetous to indulge in it unless at another's expense. He took the bottle, and, holding it to his mouth with his head turned back, he quaffed a heavy dram. This he repeated again and again, till the leaping blood "put life and mettle in his heels;" and he fell to dancing right merrily, as if penury and plenty, little and much, were all alike to him. Gilfort was now confident of success, and renewed his suit for the loan. But Dobson's fists were more firmly clenched than ever. He was one of those rare cases in which drunkenness makes a man more rabid after money, and more careful in keeping it. Nothing could be got out of him at such times. Gilfort failed altogether.

But he was not a man to give up a thing so easily. He thought and thought how he should help himself to money out of Dobson's stores. He conned over the subject at night; he whetted his faculties with "wine and wassail;" — but it was not till after the most agonized mental throes, that, starting up at midnight, he exclaimed, "I have it! — I have it! Dobson is superstitious, and I'll pull that string. I'll scare the old miser out of his money. I'll haunt him by day and by night. I'll fill his chamber with ghosts and devils. Sleep shall not press his eyelids till he has disgorged his hoarded wealth. The Lord hath need of it. I am the Lord's servant. I have great interests at stake. So many thousands in the far West who worship me as a divinity, and the number constantly increasing,— what a responsibility! I must consult their interest. I must uphold truth, and break down this pagan priesthood. I should have a right to

this old apostate's money, even if I never paid him; but that I can and will do, at my convenience. What good can it do him to lie rusting in his coffers? It will be a mercy to him, to me and to mankind, to relieve him of it."

So soliloquized Gilfort, and, as we shall see, not in vain; for, with all Dobson's avarice and drunkenness, he was a great believer in witches, spooks, incantations and invisible agencies, insomuch that he never rested without the protection of horse-shoes nailed to his door-sill, which many ignorant people suppose a witch cannot pass. Having hit upon his plan, Gilfort penned the following blasphemous missive:

"In the name of God, Amen. To my servant, Roderick Dobson, these presents come, to command thee, Roderick Dobson, to deliver over, for my use and behoof, the sum of two thousand dollars, the same to be deposited under the bridge near thy house, towards the sun-rising, by the tenth day of the first month, before the cock goeth forth of his roost, or men to their labor. And, in default hereof, blight and mildew shall come upon all thou hast, rottenness shall waste the flesh from thy bones, thy children shall be killed with death, and all the devils in hell shall wreak their infernal malice upon thy soul. In the name of the great Jehovah, by his SERVANT."

This letter was deposited by one of Gilfort's emissaries where it reached the eye of Dobson before night. As the poor old fellow read it, every hair of his head stood up, his teeth chattered,—so many as came in contact,—and he passed the night without a wink of sleep. The unearthly style, appearance and handwriting, of the letter, as also the extraordinary manner in which it reached him, as if it might have

dropped down from the clouds, all conspired to assure him that it was what it purported to be, an epistle direct from heaven transmitted by the hand of an angel. How to elude the demand was all his study. Subtracting dollars was tearing out his heart-strings. He waited, conned over the matter in his mind, tortured himself almost to madness, and finally determined to sell soul, body and all, to "den duyvel," to use his own expression, rather than give up his money. The throes of poor Dobson's soul, in coming to this terrible conclusion, may be better imagined than described. The strength of his conviction that the powers above were making this draught upon his purse was only equalled by the grasp of his avarice, which could not be relaxed by the certainty of jeoparding the highest interest of which it is possible for mortal man to conceive. Alas! what dangers will not money make a man incur! The day came and passed away, but no money was deposited under the bridge, toward the sun-rising. What was a little remarkable, however, four of Dobson's best cattle died before night, and there were fearful signs of sickness within his doors. To add to his consternation, another letter reached him, more dreadful than the first:

"The great God to Roderick Dobson, showeth that, in the plenitude of my mercy, I have added further space for thee to repent, and thus avert impending woes. Though I might in justice cut thee off and all thou hast, as thy cattle have this day died by my visitation, and thus punish without hope thy contempt of my authority in withholding the money of which I have need; yet, now appoint I unto thee the fifteenth day of the first month, as the time wherein thou mayest redeem thy body from pestilence, wasting and death, and thy

soul from outer darkness, by depositing thy money under the bridge as aforesaid, early in the morning, before the first rays pencil the east, while the ox is yet in his stall, and the laboring man in his couch. And, in default hereof, thy dwelling shall be consumed by lightning, murrain shall smite thy cattle, thy flocks shall perish with destruction, thy wife shall be given to another, thy children be vagabond and beg, and thy soul shall be the sport of demons to all eternity. In virtue of my Godhead, by the hand of my SERVANT."

By this time Dobson had become extremely nervous, from his superstitious fears, the death of his cattle, the want of sleep, and, most of all, from continued drunkenness. A suspicion is also abroad that the whiskey Gilfort gave him was mixed with a maddening drug, as, from that moment, he was never himself again. But we see no necessity for such a conclusion. Continued drunkenness operating upon a mind habitually superstitious, as the Dutch are, is sufficient to account for all. Besides, the evil eye of Gilfort was never brought to bear upon a weak man like Dobson, when it did not bewitch him. Hence, the effect of this second missive was far more decided than the first. He immediately arranged to deposit the money. But, upon counting his funds, he found they fell short of the demand. This did not dispel the delusion, but rather prompted him to supply the deficiency by borrowing. The neighbor on whom he called for the purpose was surprised at such a request from Dobson, who was known to overflow with cash. "What possible necessity, Mr. Dobson, has driven you to this?" said the man.

Dobson, with a wild stare out of his bloodshot eyes, stammered an excuse for waiving the question. "You knows,

neighbor, that — a — a — a body can't have, — one's family, you knows."

"What! your family, Dobson, drive you to this? That 's more than I believe. You are not a man to be filched."

"No, not a man to be filched, because I takes care of my own. But there is a God above," he added, with an earnest expression of his rubicund face, "and I 'm afeard to filch from Him."

"To filch from your Maker! Pray what has that to do with your want of money?" replied the man, now more surprised than ever.

"Why, here, here," holding up his two letters, with a trembling hand; "here 's my warrant for the money." The man read the letters. "What does you think of them?" inquired Dobson, with an agonized expression.

"Think! I think they are a blasphemous device of some swindling hypocrite, attempting to profit by your superstition."

"By Saint Nicholas, I 'd like to think so too!" said Dobson, incredulously.

"Think so! Pray, why have you come here to borrow?"

"Because I has n't the money by me."

"What! — are you such a fool as to suppose that the All-wise don't know how much money you have? Would he command you to put under that bridge what he knows you have not?"

This did not satisfy Dobson. The poison of whiskey and of Gilfort's incantation had gone too deep, and wrought too powerfully upon his nerves, to admit of his feeling the force of such reasoning. His neighbor, therefore, lent him the money, determined to watch the bridge, after the deposit was made, to see what would become of it.

Dobson felt that he was haunted. His house was full of spooks, which were yawling like cats through its rooms and passages, during the live-long night. He knew they were spooks, he said, because there were no cats in it, and he contrived to be from home as much as possible. The night before depositing the money, he was away on a drunken brawl, and did not return till twelve o'clock. He was so overcome with liquor as to have just strength enough to put out his horse. He reached his barn, removed the saddle, and placed it on the ground, while he tied the horse and went up into the mow to get hay. As he clambered up, he saw, or thought he saw, a spectral image, wrapped in a white sheet, standing in the corner of the hay-mow, and looking down upon him with flaming eyes; which so terrified him that he well-nigh fell senseless on the floor, and had barely life to escape, leaving the saddle, the open barn and all, a prey to his cattle. He ran home and crept into his bed, more dead than alive. After an hour of feverish restlessness, the liquor in his blood induced a fitful sleep, from which he was soon awaked by a brilliant light in his room. He sat up in bed and looked to see what it meant, when he saw three men, two in middle age, one of whom seemed to be sick, and the other was supporting him, while the third was an aged man, with gray locks hanging down upon his shoulders. Dobson gazed a moment in wild affright, when the old man came to the foot of the bed, and looked him direct in the face,— and lo! who should it be but the ghost of his own father, who had been dead some years! Dobson tried to speak to him, but his tongue refused its cunning. He then tried to cry out, but his voice would not come. In a moment all vanished, and his room was dark as before.

It was now three of the fatal morning. Not a wink had

poor Dobson slept, after this frightful vision. Still, he could not bring himself to deposit his money under the bridge. The miserly cords of his heart grew tighter and tighter, as the hour of parting with his idol approached. It seemed to him worse than death. He was more than half resolved to let the spooks take his soul, rather than his money. While these dreadful thoughts were revolving in his mind, and every nerve of sensation was strained to its utmost tension, he heard the rumbling of distant thunder. It came nearer and nearer, was more and more terrific, and he looked every moment for the lightnings to kindle on his house, according to the threatened vengeance of one of his letters. At length it broke directly over him in a terrific volley, and he believed that all his wealth would instantly be converted to ashes. He feared it was already too late to avert the doom; whereupon, leaping out of bed like a maniac, he ran half-naked through the snow and winds of a dreadful morning, and left his bag of money under the bridge, and then made his escape, relieved of the intolerable burden upon his conscience.

Gilfort watched every movement; and, no sooner had the deposit been made, than he crept from his lurking-place in disguise, to make sure of his prey. Nor did the neighbor of whom Dobson effected the loan reach the spot till Gilfort had pocketed the money, and was creeping from under the bridge. As he arrived at one end of the bridge, lo! a spectre of horrid mien presented itself to his view, which made him quake with fear, and excited images in his mind most dreadful to conceive. He saw through the deep, dusky morning, the dim outlines of what seemed a being of immensely tall proportions, covered with hair and surmounted above with horns, while a prodigious length of tail dangled behind, as he crept from under the bridge. Withal, there was a limp and

amble in his gait that left the man no reason to doubt that it was cloven-foot himself. Choosing to avoid such an encounter, and trusting to nimble feet, he took to his heels. A second thought restored his vapid courage, and he turned back to try upon Old Scratch the virtue of a club with which he was armed. He met the mysterious being as he was mounting the bank of the creek, and levelled at him a prodigious blow, which sent him tumbling upon the ice. Here he gathered up his huge length, ran under the bridge, and made his escape another way, the man being too much agitated by doubt and fear to make good the advantage which he had gained.

How much of this scene of enchantment was owing to Dobson's inbred superstition, inflamed by whiskey, which has a mysterious connection with spiritual agency, as we have before stated; or how much of it was brought about by Gilfort's contrivance, as the ghosts and thunder, for instance; or how much was real, we must leave the reader to judge. The appearance at the bridge was afterwards explained by the fact that Gilfort had gone to a tannery, pilfered an ox-hide, put it over him from head to foot, with horns projecting above and tail dangling at the other extremity, and in this disguise had appeared as the servant of the Most High, to fill his pockets with poor Dobson's money. The blow which was inflicted left an indelible mark on Gilfort's face just below the eye, which he afterwards gloried in as one of the wounds of an honorable warfare.

The robbery made much talk. Sundry innocent persons were taken up and examined, but, in default of proof, they were discharged. At length, suspicion fastened strongly upon Gilfort, from the fact of his attempt to borrow money, and a report that he had a sore face and a black eye about

those days. Besides, when the man who gave the blow saw Gilfort, he made oath that he believed him to be the man. On this evidence he was taken up, and it would have gone hard with him, had he not found persons to swear to an *alibi*, whose testimony was thought to have been received with the greater readiness, on account of the influence of certain persons in conducting the prosecution, with whom Gilfort was united in a secret society.

Thus we have endeavored to sketch faithfully this extraordinary case, in which there is much more of fact than of fiction, not only as showing the witchcraft of wine, but also the blighting influence of a successful religious imposture. In justice to Skampton, it must be said that his relations to Gilfort were solely of a business kind, and he had no suspicion of his real character. Gilfort's spiritual nature was thoroughly corrupted by his parentage, by his training, by wine, and by all his habits of thinking, feeling and acting. There was no congruity in his imposture, it is true; but there was craft, cunning, intensity, and a bold spirit, rich in expedients to push on his great work in life, by any instrumentality that might chance to fall in his way.

No corrupt influences are so much to be dreaded as those which assume identity with invisible power. The work of the Jesuits, in brutalizing the reason and conscience, is more fatal than a depopulated and devastated country in the train of conquering armies. These physical evils may be repaired and restored by the innate energy of man and advancing population. Not so with the dark traces which a triumphant fanaticism leaves on the subject mind. Its perversions are written on a basis of adamant, and will not yield to the abrasion of time and improving reason. Errors of religion intrench themselves in those deep and powerful sym-

pathies which wax as the other passions wane, and grow with their decay. After connubial love is quenched in man's heart; after death has unclenched the iron grasp of his avarice; after ambition has ceased to pant for new laurels; yea, after all the most active impulses are cold and dead, then, with a palsied hand, he writes his scarcely legible name, devising his goods, and estates, and honors, as a sacrifice upon the altar of his fanaticism, to insure the rest of his soul in that unknown land which lies beyond. Then, amid the wrecks of his earthly being, the diseased and distorted elements of his spiritual nature appear in their greatest activity, and achieve their mightiest victories. The clenched hand of avarice cannot withstand a power like this. Even Dobson is made to give his thousands, when, through liquor, or the incantations of an artful heresiarch, he comes distinctly to feel his connection with the spirit-land.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FORCES RECONNOITRING.

"There are no tricks in plain and simple faith:
But hollow men, like horses hot at hand,
Make gallant show and promise of their mettle,
But, when they should endure the bloody spur,
They fall their crests, and, like deceitful jades,
Sink in the trial."—SHAKSPEARE.

RELIEVED of pecuniary embarrassment, Gilfort now applied to the main work in hand. He had peculiar advantages

as a *lobby* member. His position in the West, his colonial fame, the mysterious enchantment which invested his name, and his great powers of personal address, made his anteroom dominion irresistible and overwhelming. The members felt themselves flattered with the court paid to them by such a man. He shrewdly took them, one by one, and made each feel that *he* was a special favorite, and the chief reliance for the success of his suit against the Maine Law. The member, supposing himself the only one thus honored, freely gave the required pledge as an act of courtesy, reflecting within himself that *his* solitary vote could not materially affect the result one way or the other. In this manner Gilfort artfully tied the hands of a majority in both houses from supporting the bill. He laughed in his sleeve at such a collection of dough-faces in the place of power over a great people.

Meantime, the public mind was in a state of excited expectancy in reference to the battle between Bludgeon and his enemies. Some said one thing, and some another. Betting ran high on both sides. If men stopped to talk at the corners of the streets, this was the subject. In the theatres, operas, hotels, barber-shops, counting-rooms, printing-offices, everywhere, all the words, aside from the business in hand, were of the Maine Law, Saphead, Bludgeon, Skampton, Gilfort, and the great contest of which their city was to be the seat. Stories of Bludgeon were hawked about in the penny sheets, and newsmongers were reaping a golden harvest out of the excitement. But at no place was more felt or said on the subject than at Buck's Saloon. This was, externally, an unpretending-looking place near the capitol, where the members went to "liquor." Many a thundering oration found here its inspiration. Buck's Saloon was a powerful agent against the Maine Law. Its alcoholic fountain flowed to

many a legislative gullet, to give mettle and motion to the anti-temperance enterprise. The front door of Buck's was a plain one, with a screen standing within, to cast a shading over the splendid drinking saloon into which it opened, the entire back end of which was occupied by the bar, from which the tempting bait presented to longing eyes every variety of hue, from pale ale to brown stout and London porter, and from Scotch whiskey to cloudy port. A row of men, swallowing down the mind-killing potion, were arranged in front, like a forlorn hope in the very teeth of the enemy's batteries.

In a side room, which had its own entrance from the street, and from which the drinking saloon was cautiously concealed, might be seen rows of white marble circular tables, at each of which, at almost all hours of the twenty-four, might be seen — as also at a succession of side-tables of like material — parties of ladies and gentlemen, over ices, sherbets, oyster-soups, roast oysters, fricasseed chickens, tarts, jellies, pies, nuts, raisins, cakes, according to the liking of each; with here and there a modest glass of wine, like a cat in a strange garret. This was a beverage allowed in this room only for special purposes, that temperance customers might not take the alarm, and withdraw their patronage. Directly back of these rooms, shaded passages led to a splendid bowling-alley, on the right of which was a drinking recess to accommodate the bowlers, and also to stow away those who had become decidedly tight in the drinking saloon; while to the left was a gambling haunt,— the *sanctum sanctorum* of the hell,— to which only its consecrated priests were admitted. Here, from morning to night, and night to morning, week in and week out, year in and year out, the landsharks preyed upon their victims, to whom they dealt out robbery, suicide and murder, by wholesale.

These haunts were unusually full, as the time of Bludgeon's appearance drew on. In the drinking saloon discussion ran high, and sometimes ended in blows. On one of these evenings, Mr. Meserve, the member from New York, met Mr. Whittemore, a senator from the country. "What will you take?" said Meserve.

"I'm a temperance man, sir," replied Whittemore. "I never take anything."

"Confound you! what are you here for, then? A spy, eh? to get ammunition for this cursed Bludgeon's gun!"

"So long as I behave like a gentleman, Meserve, I'm entitled to be treated with respect. Are you a secret police, to inquire into men's motives?"

"No; only, if you are a Bludgeon man, this is no place for you."

"I am a friend of temperance; I owe my place in the Senate to my being so, and I am never ashamed to own it, here or anywhere. But this does not preclude me from a little bowling exercise, after so many hours of confinement to my seat in the house."

"Ay, ay; if that's your object, I'll join you. Cathburt, how are you?" added Meserve, to a young man who at that moment entered.

"Nicely, thank you."

"No, Cathburt, you are not nicely; you need n't think to deceive me; your face looks lightning-struck. Have you been in a thunder-storm?"

"What will you take, Meserve?" said the young man, anxious to elude this catechetical scrutiny, as his haggard face, his wandering, restless eye, his parched lips, and excited demeanor, told too plainly that his mind was the seat of tormenting ideas, which, in default of a tongue to make them-

selves visible, were thus pushing themselves into notice through all the cracks and crevices of the soul.

"Mint-julep, I think," replied Meserve. "'T will cool the heated brain, and make us ourselves again. Let 's be merry while we can. Bludgeon 's at hand, to blow us sky-high."

"Would he 'd come a week sooner!" replied Cathburt, with an involuntary sigh.

"What ails you, Cathburt? In love? Heard from your father of late? Anything the matter?"

"Come, here 's for you," said Cathburt, taking a julep from the waiter, and handing it to Meserve, and beginning to sip his own.

"Do you know this Bludgeon, Whittemore?" inquired Meserve.

"Yes, like a book. He 's a roarer. Meserve, I want you to pledge me that you will not drink a drop that intoxicates for one week, and that you 'll give up that week to hearing Bludgeon. Then see if you 'll laugh at the pledge any more. I much doubt if you did n't stick it on your hat, and wear it as a cockade."

"Go to destruction! I 'd as soon have a thief 's mark."

"Yes, a cropped ear would be honorable in the comparison," replied Dumble, another man from the country, who had just joined the party.

"Confound Bludgeon! I 'll drink in spite of him and all his crew,— that I will!" said Meserve, sucking the last drop of his julep. "Now, gentlemen, I 'm ready for a round."

The party adjourned to the bowling-alley, and commenced rolling. Whittemore felt himself in an awkward position, as well he might, and could get up no spirit for the game. Cathburt was still more spiritless; the left door— which the

others did not understand — occupying all his attention. A siren voice seemed luring him upon the gambler's dangerous coast, against which his principles and his vows remonstrated, but towards which a mysterious spell was urging him by its fatal enchantments. At length he excused himself, and entered the dangerous door. This broke up the party, and the others stepped into the drinking recess to rest themselves. Here they found twenty or thirty persons in the various stages of intoxication, from the excitement of the first glass, to stolid, beastly insensibility. "Gentlemen, let 's eat and drink, for to-morrow — Blugdeon comes!" said Meserve, with a laugh.

"To-morrow we *die*, you mean rather," added Dumble. "It 's hard to tell which is the worse, dying or being choked by this blood-hound. He 's ruined my business."

"Then you, too, know Bludgeon, Dumble?" said Meserve.

"Yes, to my cost. He has been to our town, and, by his endless clatter, has spoilt my tavern-stand. Othello's occupation 's gone, and he 's here looking for business."

"Is your name Othello?" inquired a half-drunk, stupid looking fellow. "I—I—I have a friend of that 'are name."

"No," said Dumble, laughing, "I mean, by Othello, any man who is driven out of the liquor-business by this cursed temperance movement."

"Yes, 'pon my honor," said the fellow, "this reformed drunkard, Bludgeon, is drunker than any of us. That 's my opinion."

"Down with Bludgeon! Down with Bludgeon!" was now the general cry.

"Gentlemen," said Whittemore, "though I am not in the habit of betting, I 'll wager ten dollars against one, on every person in the room, that, if he will follow up Bludgeon, in

every discourse, for one week, and will not drink a drop that intoxicates in the mean-time, he will take the pledge, and become a temperance man."

"I'll take you up at that," said Meserve; "plank your dollars, and I will mine!"

"You'll lose your money, Meserve," said Dumble. "You have no idea of this man's thunder. He's an iron battery, whose guns always hit. Besides, the victory is in the condition of this bet: not to taste liquor for a week. That's enough to put any man in the notion of drinking no more."

"I cannot plank my money," said Whittemore, "till I see how many will stand to the conditions."

"I'll stand." "And so will I." "And I," "I," "I," — until all were pledged, except those who were too far gone to understand the question.

"I'll hear Bludgeon," said one, "and I wish to God it might make me a temperate man!"

"My sufferings, in body and mind," said another bloated, trembling victim, "no tongue can express. I'd give worlds to be as I was before I ever drank!"

"My mother prayed, with her dying breath, that I might be saved from rum, of which my father was a victim," said another, beginning to weep at this recollection of his mother.

Ah, how little do we consider the miseries of the vicious! The tendencies to reformation underlie the most unpromising characters. The silent workings of conscience; anticipations of a coming judgment; the heart-sickness which vice induces; the sweet memory of days of comparative innocence, when a mother's fond eye, a sister's love, and a brother's confidence, occupied the place of present scorn, neglect and infamy; all these, and many other causes exist, to predispose to virtue even those now most abandoned; provided the hope of securing so pre-

cious a boon were once to get possession of the mind. The hopelessness of vice is one of the great reasons of its perpetuity. Can the harlot expect to be otherwise than a harlot still? If in conduct she amends, in social position she is the same. The hope of returning to innocence, or justification, is the great desideratum of Christianity. So, hope is what our temperance reformers must carry with them, when they visit earth's hells, and deal with its lost spirits. All that is wanted, in many cases, is the encouragement that friends, health, peace and prosperity, will surely follow the total abandonment of the cup. To supply a hope like this is a part of philanthropy's work, of which we find the highest precedent in the religion we profess.

Cathburt found the gambling company in full blast. Two noted gamblers, Gripe and Bobbin, were the ruling geniuses of the place. They were cool, collected, sharp-sighted, deep-seated villains, who could read cards as well on the back as the face, and who could conjure them into just such a position in the pack in shuffling as they desired. Their business was to decoy in those who had money,— young men, for the most part, who were fond of cards, and adepts in them in their own estimation, but who had never gambled, except occasionally to stake the liquor they needed to give them inspiration. Gripe and Bobbin would take care that the game should go against themselves so long as this liquor-betting continued; but, as soon as the excitement ran high enough for dollars by the ten and the hundred, then they were on hand, and the tyro gambler would be sure to come off minus all he had. Cathburt had been thus taken in, which was the cause of his haggard and excited appearance. Night after night he had followed up the damning game, losing, but hoping to regain all by the next cast, till every cent was gone, except five

thousand dollars, which his father had sent him to take up a mortgage with, that had long encumbered the family estate, to the unspeakable annoyance of all the household. His labor-stricken parents had toiled, and saved, and economized, and stinted themselves to the lowest supplies of their personal wants, in order to relieve the property, out of which they hoped to live in their extreme old age, of this encumbrance. As soon as Cathburt lost all his own money, he resolved he would go no further. He would not plank a cent of the five thousand dollars which his father had intrusted to him. But Gripe, who divined the state of the case with him, as soon as he entered the room again, abandoned all other customers, and bestowed upon him his sole attention. He was all smiles, spoke of the loss of Cathburt's money as the merest accident, and was sure so accomplished a player would win it all back again, and especially at cribbage, in which he knew he was so very expert.— "Let us try our hand at crib, Mr. Cathburt, which you like so much, and which we two can play together. It is a scientific game, and the discipline I hope to acquire by means of it will reconcile me to the money which I know you cannot fail to win from me."

"No, Gripe, my vow is taken, and you need not persuade."

"Well, if you have grown so puritanic all at once as not to play for money, I'll stake with you a bottle of Buck's best,"— an excellent quality of old Madeira, to be had only at Buck's. The temptation took with the excited Cathburt, and he accepted and won the bet at cribbage. Cathburt drank more than his share of the wine; and, alas! it proved to him gambling wine indeed; exciting the most brilliant hopes of winning a fortune at cards, and overcoming all his repugnance to planking his father's money. At it they went, betting

small at first, then larger and larger, until the last cent of the five thousand dollars melted away under his hand. It was now three of the lurid morning. The consciousness of the full extent of the dreadful calamity rolled over him like a crushing mountain. His head was giddy, and he reeled towards a door opening into the back-yard, through which he disappeared.

"Suppose our doings were revealed to Bludgeon," said another young man, who had fared little better in the hands of Bobbin.

"The scoundrel that does such a deed will get *that* through his heart!" said Gripe, drawing a gleaming stiletto blade from its concealed scabbard in his bosom. "Better have all the New York police upon us than that blackguard!"

"But I 'll send daylight through him, the moment he moves his viper tongue against Buck's Saloon!" said Bobbin, drawing a sword-cane, and flourishing it around his head.

The young man cowered under arguments like these, of which he had no mistrust till this moment.

Morning came, but no Cathburt appeared. The search became exciting and universal. Meantime, Saphead returned at the head of his marshalled legions, and they went into session, with the Honorable Michael Skampton in the chair. The first meeting was enormous, and, being for the most part men variously connected with the liquor business, interest had whetted them to malignity against the Maine Law and its friends. Skampton, in his opening speech, breathed out the rabid conservatism of his spirit in general, more than against this specific law. "We are met," he said, "to devise a remedy for the innovations of the age. All the old landmarks of doctrine, usage, legislation and business, are in danger of going by the board. It has come to that, that a

man who retires at night an honest tradesman earning his bread by the sweat of his face wakes up in the morning and finds himself a criminal before the law and public opinion. He has no alternative but to change his business, and leave his family to starve, or submit to fine and imprisonment. My old uncle made a large fortune by importing servants from Africa; but, if I were to do it, I should be punished as a pirate and an outlaw. And now there is a restless set of vagabonds among us, who are determined to place in the same category those who hold slaves and deal in liquor. Will you submit to these innovations, gentlemen,—will you?"

"No, we 'll die first!" was the murmured response from a thousand voices.

"It is not a question of money, gentlemen, so much as of character, of right,—immutable, inalienable, and eternal right. Will you submit to have your names handed down to posterity, blackened and anathematized, to be the reproach of your children, as those who had held property, and prosecuted trade, and amassed fortunes, in contempt of justice and law? Will you submit to be accused of instigating crime and producing pauperage by the wholesale? This, gentlemen, this is what our enemies are attempting to bring upon us. This is the gist and animus of this detestable Maine Law. The myrmidons of this law, if it pass, will enter our shops and pour our capital into the gutters. They will pick our pockets with fines. They will confine our persons among felons. They will beggar our wives. They will blight and blast our unoffending children. Gentlemen, will you bow your necks to such a yoke?"

"No; we 'll take the sword first!" resounded from a moving sea of heads, with eyes of fire turned upon the speaker.

The first meeting resulted in little more than the appoint-

ment of a committee to draught resolutions to be embodied in a memorial to both houses of the Legislature. This committee, which was large, held its sessions in Skampton's library. The arrangement was for each member to write one resolution, and then, out of the whole, to make their report. The sentiments found on the collected papers were to the following effect:

"That the Maine Law is a warfare upon the manufacture, sale, use and enjoyment, of all those accustomed beverages of the civilized world, from time immemorial, such as wines, liquors, cordials, beer, ale, porter, cider, and the like; subjecting to fines, imprisonments, and other penalties, one of our most ancient and necessary sources of comfort and wealth."

"That it is our natural, primary, and irrevocable right to use the fruits of the earth, whether naturally produced or artificially prepared, both for meat and for drink, at our own personal discretion and responsibility."

In penning this resolution, the venerable committee lost sight of its injurious bearing upon *present* laws, as well as the one *proposed*. In denying the right to sell without a license, the state long since assumed that we are *not* at liberty to use the fruit of the earth as we choose, but that we may be placed under restraint, when such use is found prejudicial to the public weal. If the state may license, it may refuse licenses to as many as it pleases, or to all; or, it may place a license under such restrictions as it pleases. It may refuse licenses to sell as a beverage, and give them to sell for other purposes; and, if it may do thus, then it may enact stringent penalties, if its legislation cannot be carried out without. All this is involved in our present legislation, as much as by the Maine Law.

"That the enactment of such a law by any legislative majority, however great, would be the usurpation of despotic powers, and an invasion of constitutional rights."

Are not *any* laws prohibiting the liquor traffic without license equally so?

"That we regard this law as the audacious, unscrupulous, and fanatical project of certain conventional associations, known as Temperance or Total Abstinence Societies, acting in concerted combination, and actuated by a prurient, perverted, and reckless zeal to effect, by legislative coërcion, and the ultimate physical force of the law, extreme and impracticable purposes, which their moral influence has confessedly failed to accomplish. These societies have incurred the just indignation and political resistance and hostility of every enlightened freeman of the land, as the chief instigators and abettors of a despotic usurpation, more degrading to the moral volition and dignity of a free people, and more atrocious in its political character, than anything which history records."

More so than the law of nuisances? Yet, no nuisance known to legislation can equal, in its aggressions upon the well-being of society, the present liquor business and drinking customs. Despotic to *prevent* the crimes we so rigorously *punish*? Despotic to place our greatest cause of pauperage and wretchedness under restraint? Despotic to say to such a man as Skampton, "You shall not corrupt Mapleton society by introducing a groggery"? Equitable and right to encourage, by license of law, the ruin introduced into the Durham and Douglass families, and the deeds of death at Bucks' Saloon,—and despotic to prevent them? To what absurdities will not interest impel us?

"That the accustomed beverages of civilized men, interdicted and rendered unobtainable by this threatened law, are essen-

tial to the health and comfort, the social enjoyment, and the beneficial intercourse, of a large number of persons in every community, and who now use them unobjectionably and worthily, for these desirable purposes." And yet, from this unobjectionable and worthy use come drunkenness, insanity, crime, pauperage, and six or eight tenths of the consequent expense to the tax-paying community!

"That man, as a superior, social and moral being, exercising a rational intelligence and choice as to what is most beneficial and agreeable to himself, can no more be confined, by restrictive legislation, to the drink of the inferior animals, than to their food or clothing; and requires neither medical nor legislative prescriptions for the ordinary preservation of his health, or recuperation of his strength, nor the example either of drunkards or reformed drunkards to protect his morals."

This was a first gun at Bludgeon.

"That we are convinced, both by observation and reflection, that the infatuated total abstinence from agreeable, nutritious and renovating beverages, under conventional and unmitigated obligations, has caused, and is still causing, a greater sacrifice of health and life than even the intemperate abuse of them; the former victims, of both sexes, being far more numerous than the latter, though less publicly known." Men dying for the want of alcohol, to whom God has opened the boundless stores of animal and vegetable nature! Why has not poor Skampton, and many like him, who never taste the bane out of which they make their wealth, long since died of abstinence? There is no reasoning with this venerable committee. They are *mad* upon their idols.

"That it is undeniable and obvious that but comparatively few persons, in any community, immoderately and immorally abuse these beverages, out of the vast majority who moder-

ately, virtuously and beneficially, use them; and that their abuse by the few is no just reason for their being interdicted to the many." This comparatively few make an aggregate of thirty thousand drunkards that die annually in the United States. "It has cost our country, in ten years, for alcoholic beverages," says Edward Everett, "one hundred millions of dollars; has burned five millions more of property; has destroyed three hundred thousand lives; has sent one hundred and fifty thousand to the prisons, and one hundred thousand children to the poorhouse; caused fifteen hundred murders, two thousand suicides, and has bequeathed to the country one hundred thousand orphan children."

"That the abuse of them, however sincerely and deeply to be deplored, is grossly and ridiculously, though systematically, exaggerated, as a source of pauperism and crime; nearly all the evils of society being fanatically ascribed to this cause, to the exclusion of all other causes inherent in human nature and its imperfect social condition, and in impudent defiance of the notorious fact that these evils prevail, to at least an equal extent, in those countries where such beverages have been absolutely interdicted, both by civil and religious law, and total abstinence established for more than a thousand years." Figures cannot lie. Of five thousand three hundred and twelve arrests in Montreal, the police report says "the greater number resulted from the too free use of intoxicating drink." And this accords to the municipal history of every city on the continent. Opium-eating, bad government, false religion, and other causes of social misery and crime, no doubt exist in Turkey, to produce a worse state of things than with us; though those peculiar forms of crime which are here produced by drunkenness are there quite

unknown. Our committee, in this resolution, are not sustained by facts.

"That these beverages are not necessarily intoxicating, as is falsely and fanatically assumed by the conventional advocates of the proposed law, in the face of common experience and observation." They only necessarily lead more or less to intoxication, where they are freely used as a beverage.

"That the vice of intoxication, now rapidly diminishing among all classes, under the influence of moral suasion and example, would be aggravated by clandestine indulgences, under the proposed law; while the laws now existing, properly enforced, would be fully adequate to suppress its grosser manifestations and consequences." They are not enforced, nor can they be, for the lack of effective penalties.

"That the enforcement of the proposed law would cause a loss of many millions invested in the liquor business." Lost! No, but turned into safer and better investments.

"That the Maine Law cannot be enforced, except amid scenes of riot and bloodshed, in which, though its reckless advocates would be the chief sufferers, vast multitudes of the population would be involved, and which would be too frightful in their results for any but callous fanatics to contemplate without horror and dismay." It has been enforced in Maine without the loss of a single life, and with a vast diminution of crime and pauperage,—and why may it not be elsewhere?

Some other sentiments were proposed, but rejected, because they were deemed inappropriate to the committee as a whole. One was, "That church-members have no right to associate with worldly men in carrying out temperance measures; because they thus neutralize their religion by mixing it with human ingredients, and seek to do by a worldly organization the work which Christ has assigned to his church." But, if

we may belong to that civil society which upholds the liquor traffic, may we not to an organization for pulling it down? If worldly men will go with us in a Christian reform, are we authorized to forbid them? "Forbid them not."

Peter Pegan, our conservative editor, being one of the committee, now gave signs of having something on his mind. His meagre, misshapen person, after various contortions, assumed a position as erect as the burden of its responsibilities would admit, and said,

"Gentlemen, you know how many subscribers I have lost by means of these temperance fanatics. I cannot, of course, expect pecuniary compensation; but it would be an unction to my burdened mind to know that I had your approbation, and that you were disposed to give my paper the position to which my labors and sacrifices entitle it. It is the oldest, has the largest circulation, and, withal, is more central to those who act with us. For these reasons, is it too much to ask that it should be made the oracle of the conservative movement?"

"Certainly not; certainly not," responded various voices.

"Moreover, gentlemen, it is but just that I should acquaint you with the perfect system to which, after much experience, I have reduced the powerful enginery of the periodical press. Take the matter of *puffs*, *caustics* and *blanks*, for instance, and you will see how impossible it is for the public to withstand my well-charged artillery. I suppose twenty thousand persons are looking to me for that food for their vanity which is dealt out through the columns of a newspaper. Hence, I am obliged to drive a great trade in puffs; and, to do it most effectively, I have arranged the matter to be included in them into a hundred divisions, and have written that number of puffs, and had them stereotyped, with vacant places for such

names as I please to insert. These puffs I keep constantly in use, as the most popular branch of my business. In some plates I stereotype name and all, and keep them as constantly before the public as quack advertisements. You cannot imagine, gentlemen, the facilities for my business which I derive from these plates. I can cater to the public vanity at half the expense.

"Besides, I have fifty plates, which, in the parlance of my office, are called *caustics*, because they vex and cauterize as much as a puff soothes and pleases. These caustic-plates rise in severity, so that the last is fifty times as severe and abusive as the first. All above forty I consider a dead shot, ruining forever those at whom they are aimed. They are equal to the racks of the Inquisition, and make me as formidable. Most men will bow rather than submit to a shot. But, as to the few that set them at defiance, I dispose of them with a *blank*, which consists in simply omitting their names wholly from my columns. There are those who prefer to stand fifty caustics to one blank, so strong is their passion for notoriety. To be the devil, and known, is to them better than being an angel, incognito."

Whereupon, another resolution was added, to recommend Pegan's paper as the universal organ of conservatism.

Mr. Saphead thought the resolutions were not severe enough. "Gentlemen," said he, "I go for David's policy of scratching out the eyes of a foe. He says, 'He maketh my feet like hens' feet.'"

There was now a great commotion of the risibles in committee, one saying *hinds'* feet, and another, and others still, repeated HINDS' feet, accenting the mistaken word with great distinctness. Saphead, perplexed at the interruption, and not yet comprehending the cause, yelled out, with all his might,

"Did n't I say HENS' feet?" at the same time smiting his huge chest, and making it shake like a pot of jelly.

"Very well," said one and another, "let him go on. Saphead is a good creature; he is one of us, and always means right."

"Those who can scratch, dirt, eyes, anything that needs scratching, are the men for me," continued Saphead. "'He maketh my feet like hens' feet.'

"Howsomever, gents, as you do not like figures of speech, I offer, in plain English, the following sentiment, that we appeal to Judge Lynch. His is the only court to do justice in such cases. With the encouragement of my betters, I'll take off Bludgeon within twenty-four hours. A score of sturdy fellows from Buck's Saloon, well charged with Buck's best, will do the work in a flash."

"No, no, that'll never do," responded some. "It'll insure the passage of this detestable law," added others. "Saphead, you 're too bad."

"What! is 't worse for us to tar and feather Bludgeon, and *rail* him out of town, than for him to do this to Mr. Skampton's tenant in Mapleton?" replied Saphead, anxious to soften down his proposition as much as possible; whereupon he resumed his seat, with labored breathing, like a harpooned whale. To the honor of the committee be it said, this suggested assassination received no countenance from them.

CHAPTER XV.

BLUDGEON FIGHTING THE DEVIL.

——— "Now storming fury rose,
And clamor such as heard in heaven till now
Was never."
——— "Dire was the noise
Of conflict. Overhead the dismal hiss
Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,
And flying vaulted either host with fire." — MILTON.

MEANTIME Bludgeon had commenced the onset. Expectation, curiosity and the surging waves of excitement, were his harbingers. His place of meeting was the largest the city could afford, and was thronged to its utmost capacity, from his first lecture to the last. Bludgeon's position included much more, by this time, than that of reformed drunkard, or travelling lecturer. He spake as one having authority. He had dwelt upon the woes of mankind till they all found a response in his glowing heart. He poured out scalding tears in secret over this sin-blighted world. He had a divine commission to redress the wrongs of society. If he began as a blackguard, he ended with the spirit of a saint and a martyr. He felt the insufficiency of worldly or prudential considerations, in dealing with the evil passions, opinions and customs of mankind, and had intrenched himself within the higher sanctions of religion, God, and eternity. His satire was scathing, but was evidently pointed with love. He had come to rely mainly upon appeals to the conscience, by means of those truths and motives which Christianity supplies, in which, on some occasions, his pathos and power equalled those of White-

field, or any of the clerical lights of a former age. And yet, he never merged himself in the staid habits and professional sanctity of a clergyman; but was free, excursive, sometimes low and vulgar, and altogether more effective with the unthinking rabble than he would have been with less to offend good taste, and more to gratify a fastidious refinement.

Though Bludgeon began as a temperance lecturer, he had become a battle-axe upon all mal-practice in individual and community, in family and neighborhood, in church and in state, in slavery and in freedom, his lectures being desultory harangues against general and specific evils. His beginning was in a subdued tone, cool, unimpassioned, and apparently in a chastened and benevolent state of feeling. His tonsils, swollen by much speaking, rendered his voice hoarse and husky, like the croaking of a crane, or like the tones of a cracked bell muffled; and yet it had a marvellous effect on the nerves of an audience. No matter how crowded, how discordant its elements, or how bitter the malignity raging against himself, a few sentences, pronounced in his peculiar manner, would produce the stillness of death. In manner he was rough, uncouth, and eccentric. His training, under such a mother and in such a family, was but too visible. A delicate mind heard him with more pain than pleasure. But these disadvantages, strange as it may seem, rather increased the effect, just as sawing off a muscle jars more terribly than dissecting it by means of a keen surgical instrument. Disgusted or otherwise, the cases were rare in which persons, cultivated or uncultivated, hearing him once, did not feel a mysterious desire to hear him again. The magic of his influence was so irresistible that, in rain or sunshine, in snow and sleet, in mud and water, his audiences were alike overwhelming. His harangues were at first plain and practical,

delivered in the spirit of love and zeal, and of a character deeply to impress the heart. They were faithful, pungent, and powerful in application. He was minute in describing the various phases of a man's downward career in vice. The effect of alcohol upon the vital organs, in changing them from scarlet to crimson, and from crimson to purple, and from purple to blue, and from blue to the black of gangrene and putrefaction, was represented to the audience in a succession of drawings, on which his remarks were always graphic and powerful. He not only developed the anatomy of intemperance, but its moral feelings, tracing, with terrible accuracy, the ten thousand windings of the human heart, accompanied by appeals so searching, excoriating and irresistible, that every dormant fear was awakened, every latent memory of violated vows suggested, every smothered aspiration after temperance and virtue was inflamed to the highest pitch of intensity. Thus, in a short time, he had gathered around him an invincible band, whose confidence in their leader was unbounded, whose zeal had the fault of being excessive, if that were possible in such a cause, and who were prepared to go with him to death in doing battle upon the rampant wickedness of the world.

This spirit Bludgeon fanned by all the arts at his command, pouring out vials of scalding wrath upon those who came not up to the measure of his own views as to the evils of intemperance, the necessity of the Maine Law, and the obligation and power of the total abstinence pledge, as a specific against this vice. His body-guard he gathered up, for the most part, from the gutters, and from the hells of intemperance. They were men that felt the evils of the monster, as nothing but experience can make one feel. Buck's Saloon contributed a large proportion of them, and Whittemore more

than won his bet. Some of them gave up their whole time, going from house to house, groggery to groggery, and scattering the fire of feeling on the all-absorbing topic in every direction. The pathos and interest which they breathed into their work exceed our powers of description. The woes of the world had become their own. Their sympathy in drunkards and drunkards' families derived intensity from their own bitter recollections. Contact with them was sure to impart the infection of their zeal for reformation. The flame of feeling followed in their train, as burning hamlets and villages a stream of volcanic fire. The harangues of Bludgeon were the impulsive centre of the mighty movement. His very person was a battery which his enemies feared to encounter. It was an iron frame, set on fire by a mighty idea, and the pregnant lightnings played around his features and flashed from his eyes in volleyed power. Bullets are not the most effective missiles to be hurled at a foe. The genius of Napoleon was reckoned equal to a hundred thousand charging grenadiers. The *intellectuale* and *morale* have a force exceeding all physical warfare. Thus with Bludgeon's shots. They were aimed with more than the deadly certainty of modern artillery, taking effect upon the strong-hold in which vice and sin have intrenched themselves. Public sensation rose so high, through the efforts of his forlorn hope and his own excoriating appeals, that all the nerves of feeling among a hundred thousand people were twinging and twanging like the overstrained chords of a harp, giving forth notes of acquiescence, or resistance, according to the character and social position of those from whom they came. Already the number who had taken the pledge amounted to many thousands. The groggeries were abandoned, and the liquor-dealers were in the greatest consternation.

Now, therefore, Bludgeon felt himself prepared for a bold push, and accordingly gave notice that on a certain evening he should expose by name those who were in various ways lending themselves to the vices of alcohol. He should attack certain public houses in which the monster kennelled, and should reveal deeds of which the public had no mistrust. This notice was received by the abandoned, far and near, and especially by hotel-keepers, as a formal challenge; and, dreading exposure by their fearless assailant, they were driven to desperation, and prepared for a sanguinary defence. Society was stirred up from its deepest caverns, and its troubled elements dashed, and foamed, and raged, and lashed their adamantine barriers, as when an earthquake breaks up the bed of the sea, and drives its waters into new channels and cavities.

Two events now occurred to increase the power of the movement, and to render the community the more disposed to tolerate this dangerous expedient of attacking private character, upon which Bludgeon had been precipitated, in the intemperance of his zeal. One of these events had respect to the Skampton convention, and the other to Buck's Saloon. That convention had suffered a most mortifying depopulation, through the general rush to Bludgeon's lectures. The leaders, galled by their waning influence, employed the most attractive and distinguished speakers to discuss their foundation principles, and thus restore to themselves the errant populace. But it would not work. There was no thunder in their principles, and none in their souls. At length, one of those untoward events happened to which all deliberative assemblies are subject, to turn the laugh upon them, and to annihilate their little remaining influence. In the progress of these brilliant speeches on the refining and ennobling effects

of alcoholic beverages, on the social amenities of which they are the instrument, on their influence upon our civilization, and the certainty that we shall revert to barbarism without them, on the health they promote, and the diseases inevitable to their disuse, and much more in the same strain, Saphead, animated by the discussion, got the floor, and perpetrated one of those bulls which were common to him. Thinking to be very impressive, he began abruptly, saying,

"Friends, did you ever see a railroad start? Yes; I s'pose you have. Well, they goes glib; so this ere business goes glib; wine goes glib; Buck's best goes glib; it makes us feel nice; it gi's strength to the weak; it gi's health to the sick; it gi's motion to the tongue; it gi's ideas to the mind; it gi's good cheer to the faint. 'Give strong drink to the heavy heart,' says Paul; and he knows better than fifty Bludgeons."

As if this speech were not enough for the mortification of the rum leaders, it was followed by one from Tooney, whose bacchanalian travels had brought him to the city, where he did enough to get the means of keeping himself drunk. In squalid wretchedness, without collar or cravat, and in the filthy attire of a drunkard throughout, bloated in face, inflamed and watery in eye, and trembling in his whole frame, he rose, staggering to the top of his seat, and, in spite of efforts to the contrary, delivered himself thus, in confirmation of Saphead's speech:

"Yer honors, that 's my mind, 'xactly. I have had more 'xparance than any ither mother's son o' ye. On me sowl, I lif by the good cratur. He makes me cha'ary; he gifs me stringth; plase yer honors, he do."

This speech was followed by a roar of laughter, and, appearing in the dailies of the next morning, it set the whole city agog, at the expense of Skampton and his convention.

The other event was thus related to Bludgeon in a note, which reached him just as he was rising to begin his lecture.

"SIR: Cathburt is found. A servant at Buck's went into the back-yard, to draw water, and found his body floating in the well. He has this moment been taken out. He lies in the room where the gamblers, it is supposed, made him their victim. His poor father and mother are frantic with grief."

Bludgeon began his lecture by reading this note, and an assault upon Buck's Saloon the most scorching and terrible. From that day forth, Buck wandered as a ghost in his own abandoned haunts, till he was ejected, and committed to prison for forging a draft to relieve himself from debt. The greatest nuisance in the city thus perished, without hope. The parents of Cathburt had come in search of their son, and stood at the top of the well when his lifeless body was drawn up. Such a scene is easier imagined than described. The loss of their only son, the robbery of his money,—now first ascertained by searching his pockets,—a childless old age of penury in prospect, and, more than all, the self-accusation of having ever allowed their son cards as an amusement, which had fitted him to be taken in the snare, all together concurred to inflict wounds on their parental feelings which could never be healed. Bludgeon set on foot a subscription to take up their mortgage, and headed it with the liberal sum of five hundred dollars,—more than all he was worth, but which he was enabled to pay through the contributions of his friends. The five thousand dollars were soon raised, and enough in addition to pay all expenses; and the poor old people were sent on their way with all the alleviation to be derived from

such an act of benevolence. The faithfulness, zeal and liberality of Bludgeon, in this case, tended immeasurably to increase his power.

The time at length arrived for Bludgeon's appointed onset to begin. Skampton and his followers, having now no other resource left them, resolved to attend on the occasion in a body, confident that his attacks on personal character would furnish the means of silencing their enemy by suits at law. Consequently, the audience was immense. The largest railroad dépôt had been obtained to accommodate it, and it was thought that not less than eight thousand persons were crowded into it. Expectation was on tiptoe, and excitement up to welding heat. Indeed, what was said owed its effect not so much to anything in itself as to the previous train of events, and the absolute confidence of success which animated the leader and his assailing host. There is no courage like that which arises from the sense of maintaining right against wrong. "The righteous are as bold as a lion."

When the rum convention arrived, in all the pomp of procession, they were surprised to find seats reserved for them in a body, and no signs of timidity evinced on account of their presence. They expected to see Bludgeon cower before so august a presence; whereas he seemed hardly aware of it, so intently was he absorbed in higher interests. The audience was made up of all kinds of characters,— drunkards, gamblers, extortioners, liars, infidels of every grade, scoffers, profane swearers, libertines, and all the wrecks and pests of society, as well as of the decent and the virtuous. The latter had come from curiosity, or to aid the cause of reform, while the former determined to protect themselves from the dreaded exposures, even if they had to do it with the blood of him who should venture to make them. Interspersed among the out-

cast multitudes, here and there, were Bludgeon's forlorn hope, or body-guard, with whom he had arranged to help him, in the event of a tumultuous outbreak. The audience being duly seated, and ready, Bludgeon rose coolly and fearlessly, while the stillness of death reigned on every hand. He stood on a platform, near the centre of a sea of heads. The bleak winds of March howled around the vast structure, and, amid the awe-inspiring sounds, now distinctly audible from the deep silence, Bludgeon exclaimed, abruptly,

"I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven!"

His eyes flashed fire as he spoke, and his pale, haggard face, and croaking voice, betokened a man from the tombs rather than from the activities of the living world. The audience were electrified by the first onset.

"Such, my friends, is what I behold in you this night," said Bludgeon, his action giving the impress of reality to his words. "This is as clear to me as the fall of Satan was to our great Master. Falling from pleasure, from wine, from lust, from honor, from virtue, from hope, sweet hope, that comes to all, down, down, down, to deep, dark, eternal infamy, where pleasure is pain, where wine becomes a burning pestilence within, where lust ends in rottenness, honor in shame, virtue in incurable vice, and hope in the blackness of despair; where the scalding drops of incensed justice will fall upon you forever!"

Starting up, with a shudder, at what he had depicted, with streaming eyes, and a countenance now beaming love and solicitude, he added,

"I come to-night, my friends, to arrest you in this dangerous fall. I come to-night to assure you that total abstinence from the vice which kills will be its cure. But you hate me; you lie about me. You say that Bludgeon is a

knave and a deceiver; that he is after your money, and not your happiness. O, my friends! if your slanders were true, think you I should stand pleading with you till my lungs are so sore that when I have spoken one word, I know not that I can speak another, and laboring so constantly that if I get four hours' sleep in the twenty-four I think myself well off?"

"Here 's two lies for you to nail, Pegan," said Skampton, in a low voice; "lungs too sore to speak, yet all the time bawling; four hours' sleep; mark, Pegan!"

"Yes, yes," said Pegan, with a start and a twitch, "I'll nail 'em!"

"And all this," continued Bludgeon, "for what? For my bread, and clothes, and lodging, which, I protest, is all I have had so far."

"Another lie, Pegan," said Skampton; "mark it! mark it!"

"It 's marked," rejoined Pegan; "I shall get ammunition for my gun to-night."

By this time Bludgeon had conciliated every feeling in the house, except those of the rum convention, so far as such characters were capable of conciliation by such a speaker.

The *history* and *fall* of Satan were now announced as his theme. Satan, he said, was an impersonation of evil in man, and more especially of alcohol, which was the soul of wickedness; and if that could once be exorcised, the body and members of the monster would die; an ultraism natural to one so exclusively occupied with a particular cause of crime and misery. Bludgeon's logic and theology are far from being models. In giving a history of Satan, he touched upon every recollected case and form of the abuse of wine or alcoholic drinks, from Noah's drunkenness to this day; a theme, any one may imagine, as graphic and powerful as could pos-

sibly fall to the lot of such an orator. It was a night of drunkenness that erased great Babylon's walls from their firm foundation. It was as the consequence of drunkenness that Canaan's posterity were accursed; and every slave that clanks his chains, from Mason and Dixon's line to Cape Horn, is a memento of this damning sin. These loose positions of Bludgeon, in the manner of his using them, were not without their effect in his discourse as a whole. It was a graphic generalization, under which all the specific evils of alcohol, in the history of nations and races, were made to fay in like the inferior stones of an arch, to give strength and stability to the whole. His description of its effects in individual cases was more reliable, searching, and powerful. He followed the drunkard from his first glass, till found wallowing in the gutter, haunted by devils in a fit of delirium tremens, or dissolved into the lurid fires of hell by spontaneous combustion. He pointed out its effects upon the nervous system, in creating desire and appetite over which the drunkard has no control, and which is sure to precipitate him upon his ruin, unless a physical impossibility is interposed to intercept the flow of the bane to his lips. Nothing but the Maine Law, executed by vigorous hands, in pouring the damning bane into the gutter, and in remanding the harpies to prison who prey upon the vices of society, he said, can meet the exigences of a case like this. These and all of his points he illustrated by pertinent anecdotes, which now convulsed his audience with laughter, and now bathed it in tears, thus swelling the tide of excitement, till it rose above all bounds, and defied restraint. His own feelings, also, waxed more and more intense with his advancing argument, his manner became more and more vehement, and his hearers seemed to have lost

sight of the relations of time and place, in their absorbing interest in the images presented to their view.

By this time, to compare great things with small, Bludgeon had a ten thousand horse power all concentrated in himself, and which he could wield with one of his fingers. What was remarkable in his case, his self-possession increased with the excitement, and he had more shrewdness in wielding his terrible machinery than any other man, or even himself, in the calm of his retirement. Now he was ready for his assault. It was nine of the night. The winds still breathed, and whistled, and raged without; and, in the excited, apprehensive state of the audience, the very creaking of the building in which they were assembled seemed the shriek of some falling drunkard, as he made the final plunge of his hopeless vice. The images of agonized fathers, mothers, wives, husbands, children, deploring the doom of rum's victims, and of devils exulting over it, seemed depicted in the air they breathed, and to swarm around them like the flies of summer, to preclude all possible objects besides, and to overwhelm them with a sense of this greatest of national calamities,—drunkards, drunkenness, and the detestable liquor-traffic. Bludgeon paused. All was still, but it was the stillness that portends the hurricane. Half-suppressed groans and wailings were heard from those who now felt, as never before, the danger to their drinking friends. The speaker's burning eyes glanced and flashed from one end of the vast concourse to the other, as if searching for the point where to begin his personal onset.

At length, catching the features of Gilfort, who sat trembling by the side of Skampton, he called out his name with a voice like the sound of doom, saying, "You hypocrite, you deceiver, you human devil, rioting in the spoils of innocence and the wrecks of character, where are the souls whom you

have ruined by rum? The gutter already swarms with your victims. The prison, where you ought to be yourself, holds those whom you have tempted to crime. Your dark schemes of money-digging, your nocturnal orgies, your extortions of money in the name of the Lord, your religious fraud to cheat men into the purchase of your lands, and all the black arts by which you have hitherto sustained an accursed existence, testify against you. Is it not better for you to come to a solemn pause, and take the pledge not only not to drink more, but not to cheat, not to lie, not to palm off upon the ignorant your pious tricks, but to become henceforth a man of temperance and of virtue? But you fall, I see you fall, from pleasure, from influence, from hope, from your schemes of self-aggrandizement and all the alluring baits of this nether world, into a drunkard's grave and a drunkard's hell!"

Gilfort, pale with excitement, and lost to the consciousness of himself or his position, muttered, incoherently, "God have mercy on me! I'm a devil, sure enough! Cursed life, this! Alas, for my miserable training!"— meantime jumping up, to do he knew not what.

"Sit down, Gilfort," said Skampton, not comprehending the cause of his excitement; "don't mind the braying of that ass!"

The commotion was now general. Skampton's voice recovered Gilfort to a sense of his position, and he started to go out. But Bludgeon, mistaking it for a desire to come forward to take the pledge,— no uncommon thing with an audience under great excitement,— called out, "Make way for him! Open there to the right and left! Let the stricken wolf relieve his conscience! He may become a sheep, yet. But no,— he goes! he goes!" added Bludgeon, as he saw him

making for the door. "All is over with him. He'll come to a miserable end!"

At this, a cry of "Stop thief! Stop thief!" resounded through the vast area. All eyes looked whence it came. It was Dobson, who, rapt in the magic of the speaker's influence, believed him supernaturally directed to Gilfort as the swindler of his money. In this he was confirmed by Gilfort escaping; and, with head bare, locks dishevelled, and eyes flaming with insanity, he started in pursuit, floundering through the throng, and at the same time calling out, at the top of his voice, "Stop thief! Stop thief! Seize him! He's taken my money! Seize him!" The violence of the outcry excited the rabble round the door to attempt the arrest of Gilfort, thinking him a pickpocket who had just perpetrated some depredation within. But Gilfort, by dint of strength, forced his athletic form through the midst, and thus made his escape by one of the doors.

"Where is he? — where is he?" cried a hundred tumultuous voices, as he vanished from view.

"He's here," cried one, with an oath.

"No,— he's here," said another. "Come on! — come on!"

"No, by all that's good and gracious!" cried a third; "he went out by this door."

"He's a pickpocket!" said one.

"You're a liar!" rejoined a stout fellow; "and, if you say that again, I'll gouge your eyes out."

"He's a villain!" said twenty voices at once; and as many more affirmed him to be an honest man, whom Bludgeon had slandered.

"Can't slander such as he," replied another, and received a blow in the face for answer, which he returned; and thump,

thump, thump, went the fists, and bruised noses and flowing blood mingled in the dismal mêlée. Now Dobson entered the lists, still vociferating "Stop thief! stop thief!" when he received a thrust from a bowie-knife from a secret hand, which changed his cry into the doleful exclamation of "Murder! murder! murder! God have mercy on my soul! I am a dead man!"

All this was done sooner than the telling, Bludgeon meanwhile maintaining his position with unwavering self-possession, and holding with magic eye the sympathies of the audience, till quiet was restored. He prepared to resume. His eye now rested on Pegan, who was posted in a conspicuous position, for the convenience of taking notes. Pegan had admitted to his paper many scandalous things against Bludgeon, which infused the more gall into this assault. Fixing his searching gaze on the little great man, he said, "Thou enemy of all righteousness,— thou child of the devil! What!—here to gather lies for your polluted columns? Your intrigues are known. Your puffs, caustics and blanks, I defy them all! When has alcohol instigated a crime of which you was not the abettor? Buck's Saloon owed its power to your pen. You have written Cathburt dead, his parents childless and penniless, and filled the land with the victims of your dark conservatism!" Pegan dropped his pen, and hopped about the floor like a decapitated hen, till he finally escaped.

Next came Skampton's sentence, to whom Bludgeon cried "Blood! blood! blood!" with a thrilling effect that no other mortal knew how to produce with that word. "Blood from the grave of the Durhams cries against you for vengeance. Blood from the dust of Robson, blood from the dust of Jollops, blood from the maw of the Kamtschatka

whales, blood from pole to pole, has sealed your doom!" This, with the excitement of the occasion and the scrutiny of so many thousand eyes, was more than Skampton could endure, and he too escaped, muttering, "Law, law, law'll silence that ass!"

By this time the young men who were witnesses to the Cathburt robbery had acquainted Bludgeon with all the facts, to which Senator Whittemore had added those which passed under his observation. All these he proceeded now to detail, that the citizens might understand the real nature of the resort which legislation and the laws had licensed and established in the midst of them: A darker picture cannot be conceived than the one now sketched to the audience, which produced an involuntary response, "Down with the license law! Down with the license law! Give us the Maine Law! Break up the hells! Pour the poison into the gutter!"

Gripe, Bobbin and their crew, were present, and whetted to the keenest edge of exacerbated feeling. Murder was in their hearts. They called to one another to assist in dragging the scoundrel from the stand. "Do it!—do it!" said Bludgeon. "I defy you all! I will die on the spot, before I'll yield! Ye vipers! ye sharks of society, whose breath is pestilence, and whose words are daggers,—come on!—come! I dare you to the attack! My blood will seal your doom!"

His courage produced a panic among them, and they withdrew. But when they reached the open air their daring revived, whetted up by their comrades, who had remained without the most of the evening, and had not felt to an equal extent the magic of Bludgeon's influence. Here they all entered into a solemn oath to assassinate him before he left the stand. One of their number, more conscientious than

the rest, seeing how things would go, caused the following note to be slipped under the eye of the speaker:

"SIR:—More than three hundred stand without, ready to assassinate you at a preconcerted signal. The signal is the firing of a pistol. ONE THAT KNOWS."

Bludgeon read the note to the audience, and called on his friends not to be alarmed, to stand to their post, and deliverance would certainly come.

"Prudence dictates your escape," said a friend, privately.

"Shall such a man as I flee?" exclaimed Bludgeon, aloud.

In a moment the pistol exploded. A shriek rose up from all parts of the vast concourse, as a band of assassins, with their gleaming steel, rushed through the passages. Bludgeon commanded and produced a profound silence, great as the danger was. The mesmerism of his eye was proof against steel. Gripe, the leader of the band, felt it as a bear is said to feel the power of an unflinching human eye, and he cowered before the undaunted champion of temperance.

"I know your plans," said Bludgeon. "It is to stain your polluted souls with my innocent blood. I see your gleaming daggers, but I heed them not. No! I had as lief die to-night as at another time. Let my blood seal my message against the rum traffic. I love the people whom you rob. God is near, and his shield is my protection. He will not let me die by your hands. He has more work for me. He will smite you."

By this time they had reached the open space around the platform, and were screwing up their courage to mount it; when, overawed by the associations of the scene, and still more by the dauntless spirit of their victim, they hesitated.

"God Almighty smite thee!" said Bludgeon to Gripe, as their eyes met, when the latter, through excitement and panic, reeled, staggered, and fell to the floor. This terrified the rest of his crew, and they slunk away from view, and left Bludgeon in the undisputed possession of the field. Gripe was carried to the hospital, where he died before morning, it was thought by the special visitation of God. But the drinking habits of the man, the guilt of Cathburt's death, the breaking up of Buck's Saloon as his only remaining haunt, and his nocturnal revels and habitual sleeplessness, all concurring with the tempest of his mind during Bludgeon's harangue, are sufficient to account for his sudden and awful death, without the intervention of miracle.

CHAPTER XVI.

LOVE BETTER THAN DENUNCIATION.

"As we fall in various ways, and sink,
* * * * * * *
* * * * * * *
So manifold and various are the ways
Of reformation, fashioned to the steps
Of all infirmity, and tending all
To the same point, — attainable by all, —
Peace in ourselves, and union with our God."

WORDSWORTH.

SARAH HARCOURT was as ignorant as Charles Douglass of the real cause of their separation. The facts, so far as to her appeared, were these: Not fifteen minutes after their

last parting, her father entered her room, and inquired, "Where is Douglass?"

"Just gone, dear father, and not to return till Monday."

"Not till Monday!" he said, with apparent surprise; "then it 's all over. We shall not see him again, at present; for we must leave in an hour for New York."

"For New York, father? In an hour? What do you mean?" said Sarah, perfectly thunderstruck.

"Mean, my love? I mean this,—that if we are not there as soon as steam can carry us, you will be shuffled out of your maternal inheritance. I have this moment received intelligence to that effect."

"I cannot go, father. You can go, and do the business for me. I had rather lose it all than go at this time."

"That 's out of the question, my daughter. Your presence is necessary to prove your identity by a living witness there, as the Sarah Harcourt who inherits, in her mother, Louisa Selden's right. As to your throwing away this property, Sarah, I shall not hear to it a moment. Go you must."

"I have an engagement with Mr. Douglass on Monday, and cannot go till I see him."

"You can write him, Sarah, and explain all. Mr. Douglass is a reasonable man, and cannot fail to be satisfied. If he had been here when I entered the room, as I supposed, he would have urged your departure as earnestly as I do. Go, Sarah, we must, and that, too, within an hour, or we shall not reach the cars in time. Sit down this moment and write Douglass your explanation. A servant shall carry your note this very afternoon."

Sarah saw there was no alternative, and she wrote, stating the cause of her leaving so suddenly, promising to write him

again soon, and beseeching him to have a letter in waiting for her in New York when she arrived, as she might be compelled to rest by the way. This matter disposed of, they set off, with all possible speed, by private conveyance, for the railroad station, a distance of twenty-five miles. Mr. Harcourt took the precaution of going by a way to elude detection as much as possible, nor did they stop till the carriage set them down at the station. They rode all that night; and yet the first thing that Sarah did at the hotel where they breakfasted was to despatch a letter to Douglass, informing him of the kind manner in which her father had spoken of him, and that he might rest as secure, she thought, as if they were formally betrothed with the parental consent and blessing. She concluded with saying, "Though my body is weary and my eyes heavy with sleep, and though this, our unexpected separation, is a trial of trials, yet I have the sweet assurance that my mother's God will watch over me and over you, and that we shall yet be made useful and happy in each other's society."

After a hasty breakfast, she retired to rest, and slept calmly and sweetly over one train, when they entered the cars again, and did not leave them till they reached the endless din of the great metropolis. Sarah found things to correspond, so far as to her appeared, to the previous representations of her father. An old lady examined certain marks of her person, and gave in, under oath, that she was the veritable daughter of Louisa Selden, the wife of James Harcourt, and heiress to the Selden estate. The forms of law gone through with, Mr. Harcourt took possession of the estate in due form. Miss Harcourt's maternal family was one of the most distinguished of the early Puritan emigrants. The homestead of her grandparents was an old-fashioned mansion on the

banks of the Hudson, some distance above the city. It was invested with cultivated groves of nearly a century's growth, through which the antique structure looked down with imposing effect on the beautiful river. They found it, on their arrival, in a state of majestic decay, from having been long occupied by aged persons, who felt little interest in the improvements of present luxury and splendor. The faded glory of a former age was more congenial to its occupants than modern ornament and invention. Harcourt proceeded at once to make such changes as his fancy dictated. The rooms were fitted up in the most costly style; the walls lined with magnificent mirrors; the floors provided with the richest quality of Turkey carpeting for winter, and with the finest Indian matting for summer; all after the newest and most approved models. Splendid chandeliers hung from the ceiling; musical-boxes stood on the brackets and side-tables; the windows were hung with costly drapery; the gilt balconies were filled with the rarest exotics and flowering plants; and singing birds were provided, to pour their mellifluous notes through the rooms and halls, to regale and delight the luxurious inmates.

"Alas! no letter from Charles. Why does he not write? Is he sick? Have my letters failed? Impossible! some must have reached him. O, my heart of hearts! where is Charles, that he deigns no token to his doting Sarah?—no word, no, not one—not one!"

Such were the plaints of Miss Harcourt, amid all these splendid preparations. Her father met the case with all his address; said he would make immediate inquiries; presumed that Douglass meant soon to surprise her with a visit, or that he was devoting himself to his profession; or something of the kind prevented his writing.

"You are young, my daughter, and Mr. Douglass has years of preparation yet before him. If you should not hear from him till he gets through, it cannot prevent your union, if you are destined for each other. Be patient, my child, be patient; this is just the ordeal you need, and you 'll both see whether the root of the matter is in you, and you really have the foundation for permanent esteem. This misgiving in you is a doubtful omen; but we shall see."

Sarah cherished too fondly the hope of returning to the plantation to admit of her feeling much pleasure in these costly preparations. That was her home. She loved its seclusion. It was associated with her fondest recollections; and though her father had given no intimation of a design to remain in New York, yet all these repairs but too clearly revealed what was in his mind, and were consequently less interesting to her. Besides, her tastes did not incline her to such a use of money. Intellectual, moral, and religious pleasures were far more captivating to her feelings. The claims of the poor were also ever present to her thoughts. A large number of them were now near her home, and could be reached in her daily walks. Some were intemperate, and needed the soft hand of love to conduct them to virtue. Money would be a great solace to their needy families, some of whom were sick, and all in a state of destitution such as had never before fallen under Sarah's observation. She set about doing what she could in their behalf, and the event proved how much more effective a personal care of the drunkard's habits and wants, to convince him you love him and desire to do him good, is, than sweeping denunciations, as a means of reclaiming him to temperance. Denunciation may plough the ground, but it is the watch-care of love and charity that sows the seed, that waters the plants, that pro-

tects them against incursive enemies, and reëstablishes the prostrated mind and character of a drunkard in virtue and peace. No vice has hitherto been deemed more hopeless than this, for the good reason that we had failed to estimate the utter inability which it induces to a life of temperance, so long as the cup is offered at every turn, and nothing is done to restore its unhappy victims to their lost position in society. As soon as the cup is made more inaccessible by stringent temperance laws, and friendship supplies to the inebriate the requisite stimulants to sobriety, by exercising a care over him and by giving him the place among us which we assign to a loved one who has become feeble in mind or in body, then this vice will no longer be considered hopeless. Miss Harcourt's efforts tended this way, and, so far as they went,—for a lady, of course, could not be expected to do all the case demanded,—they were far more hopeful than the bold and excoriating denunciations of Bludgeon.

She soon found herself with so much work of this kind on hand, in the thronged population near her new home, that she felt jealous of the money which her father was so profusely lavishing upon their ancestral mansion. Had her wishes been consulted, it would have been expended in carrying out her plans of relief for the suffering, and of reform to the vicious. Her own room, in which she spent most of her time, was a little one-story wing, extending back from the main building in a circular form, with corresponding furniture; while externally it was enclosed by a conservatory, whose beautiful foliage and flowers diffused an odor around like the breezes of "Araby the blest." It was neatly furnished, but not on the costly scale of the other rooms, as she protested to her father that her taste must here be consulted. This was her Bethel. Here her books of instruction, enter-

tainment and devotion, were collected. Here she found from prayer her only means of reconciliation to the late shock to her sensibilities. What right have we to yield to moping melancholy when our wishes are crossed, so long as the Creator, with his infinite resources, is left to us, and is willing to honor our draughts of confiding faith and importunate prayer? A love-becrazed mind is one in which God is dethroned and an idol substituted in his place. Such was Miss Harcourt's reasoning. Never was devotion more deep and sincere than hers to Douglass, resulting from a mysterious sense of fitness to each other, which began in childhood; but then, with her it was subordinate to the higher claims of Him whose they both were, and whom they were bound to serve.

Many young persons, in entering a great city with every advantage of wealth, personal accomplishments, and distinguished family connections, would have yielded to the rush of worldly and selfish desires, would have merged themselves in the joys of sense, and, after a round of years, would have come out with a wasted constitution, a corrupted heart, and with every imaginable disqualification for peace or usefulness. The faith of Miss Harcourt was her security, an inheritance of brightest promise from her sainted mother, whose memory was the bow of hope, spanning the clouds of sorrow and disappointment. Besides the poor, she had no acquaintances in her own immediate neighborhood, except with the family of a resident from a foreign court, to whom she was introduced rather by accident than design. In this family was a daughter of princely character, whose manners had taken their cast from the intercourse of distinguished European society. A young man by the name of De Lisle was a frequent visitor in the same family, and the means of introducing Sarah to it. De Lisle was born to a titled inheritance and to great wealth,

but was one of those rare cases in which republican principles are made the occasion for abjuring such advantages, in order to return to the level which nature has established between man and man.

"A *natural* aristocracy," he would say, "I do not object to. Those who are really the best ought to be esteemed so. But to flourish through life in the borrowed drapery of the dead, and assume supercilious airs from the mere accident of birth, is too much for my pride." And, finding his native country uncongenial to the growth of such sentiments, he had abandoned it to try his fortunes in the New World, and to work his way to a distinction which he was too proud to borrow from his ancestors. De Lisle assumed, therefore, an untitled name, and cautiously concealed the accident of his birth. He was a young man of truly noble principles, who had drunk deep into ancient and modern learning, and whose republicanism, like Milton's, was derived from the communion of mind in all ages.

This young man had frequently met with Mr. Harcourt and his daughter in their morning walks. Sarah still retained her love of out-door life — often taking long walks with her father, sometimes going along the margin of the river, and sometimes among the contiguous farms and groves. On these occasions De Lisle would often fall in with them, attracted at first by the engaging person of Miss Harcourt, but afterwards by the extraordinary turn of her conversation. It was a page he had never read, and he wished to study it. As Sarah's heart always overflowed with a piety and benevolence which seemed to have become her very life, so her conversation spontaneously partook of the same, and even her countenance and whole being were continually throwing out, without effort or design on her part, the coruscations of

heavenly light. No one who has seen the utmost that Christianity has done and is doing for personal elevation, will deem this an overwrought picture.

De Lisle had seen the pomp and ceremony of religion. He had felt the inspiration of massy pillars, time-hallowed cathedrals, the deep gloom of their shaded windows, the thundering bass of their organs, the chime of pealing bells, deluging the landscape with sound, and all these magical contrivances for overawing the sense and imagination. He had been familiar with the cant of dissent, and the various forms in which sect and schism offer to Heaven their conflicting devotions. But the purity of the evangelical spirit, apart from cant and sectarian contrivance, he had never seen, till he witnessed it in the person of Sarah Harcourt. The contemplation of it charmed, astonished, and confounded him. It had depths which he felt himself unable to fathom, heights he could not surmount, and a width and length which he could not comprehend. How a young person, with every endowment of wealth, and every accomplishment of person, unscathed by disease and unblighted by sorrow, should withdraw from all those circles in which she was so eminently fitted to shine, not from the morbid promptings of a perverted conscience, not from the dread of divine vengeance, not from the ascetic ambition of a saint's renown, but because she professed herself too happy to need them, he could not understand. "What is the nature of this happiness, which is so independent of the ordinary sources of enjoyment? and whence comes it?" were questions which he often revolved in his mind. "If there is anything of the kind which is real, and not fictitious, then we have something to put in the place of those pleasures which are the great lure to vice. We have a counter excitement of felicitous feeling, to meet those mental cravings which seek to

slake themselves in wine, in scenic representations, and in a thousand ways, which to untold multitudes end only in crime and misery." So reasoned De Lisle.

He hoped to unravel the matter by means of Miss Julia, the young lady to whom we have alluded, and hence said to her: "I am surprised you do not make the acquaintance of Miss Harcourt."

"What! in love?" said Julia, laughing.

"No; not till I know what I am loving."

"Why, you will love as pretty a girl as the world affords, if I may judge from my occasional glimpses of her."

"If that were all that was needed to elicit one's love, I need not look beyond present company."

"O you are so complimentary! But love, you know, is blind, and has his freaks."

"I will venture his freaks, Miss Julia, if you will unravel the mystery of a happiness so independent of the ordinary food by which happiness subsists. Miss Harcourt seems to have a happiness that makes yours and mine tasteless, and I would be glad to know what it is."

"Does she assign this as a reason for keeping aloof from the gayeties of the town?"

"She does, and that too with so much sincerity, that I am bound to believe her."

"But what can I do to unravel the mystery?"

"O, you ladies have a tact in finding out each other which we have not."

"Well, I will do what I can to interpret the riddle."

Accordingly, Miss Julia soon after called and made Sarah's acquaintance. A mutual interest and intimacy grew up between them, though in education, habit, and especially in religion, they were totally unlike. Julia was gay, volatile,

and in the highest degree extravagant in her notions of ancestral origin and personal dignity. She seemed to regard distinctions of rank, and station, and enlarged resources of worldly pleasure, the most exalted possession to be hoped or desired. Still, she was a generous, great-souled girl, to whom such low conceptions of the end of living were uncongenial, and the growth merely of a preposterous education. The same circumstances under which Sarah had been placed, and especially the same maternal influence, might have made Miss Julia, in humility, in meekness, in piety and in faith, equally remarkable, equally brilliant. Alas! how many never rise above the pleasures of sense, who might have shone as stars of the first magnitude in the spiritual galaxy! If they stop short of a career of open vice, still they travel the road that leads thousands and millions to that dismal goal. Yea, by their example they help others forward to the ruin from which their own constitutional moderation secures them. And they do it because they are educated to feel that there is no other way of finding pleasure. To gratify De Lisle, Julia invited Sarah to tea on the ensuing Thursday evening. "And I shall expect you to be present," she said to that gentleman. "You need not think to make me your clerk, to read her for you."

"That will not do," said De Lisle. "My presence would seal the document."

"Seal the document! Mr. De Lisle? No. I see you do not understand Miss Harcourt. She is all openness, all frankness. Her lips are never sealed to any one, much less against you, of whom she entertains so high an opinion."

"A high opinion of me! What do you mean? We never met except in our rural rambles, when we were under the restraint of her father's presence, who, I see, has no sym-

pathy with her peculiar views. He is a mere man of the world, like the rest of us."

"Well, Miss Harcourt speaks of the respect and confidence with which you have inspired her."

"How came she to say that?"

"Why, I told her we should have only a family party at tea, except yourself, a particular friend. And she expressed herself pleased with the prospect of meeting one in whose conversation she had been so much interested."

"Thanks to my stars! then I am to be my own interpreter."

CHAPTER XVII.

WOMAN'S MISSION.

"And to the Presence in the room he said,
'What writest thou?' The vision raised its head,
And, with a look made all of sweet accord,
Answered, 'The names of those that love the Lord.'
'And is mine one?' said Abou. 'Nay, not so,'
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still, and said, 'I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow-men.'"—LEIGH HUNT.

IT was the union of qualities which De Lisle had deemed subversive of each other that excited his interest in Miss Harcourt,— zeal and gentleness, austerity and sweetness, a repulsive severity to sin, with tenderness to the sinner; a saintly and severe hold upon the realities of eternity, with a buoyancy of spirits bordering on gayety and mirthfulness.

Hers was not a piety to make people miserable, but a stock in bank, upon which any might draw at will. Her peace with Heaven was not purchased at the expense of peace on earth and good-will towards men. Her attractions of person were set off with a conversation that administers grace to them that hear. She was not faultless, though she seemed so, above most others, because her religion was associated with humanity, and her piety with benevolence. It was this aspect of her character that excited De Lisle's curiosity, and it was probably the same that provoked the inquiry of old as to the reason of the Christian's hope. When religion repudiates humanity, disfigures itself by cant, makes a merit of gloomy interjections and indelicate attacks upon the prejudices of a man of the world, as if to be very pious is to be very disagreeable, how can it win for itself the respect of mankind?

"Glad to see you at last, Mr. De Lisle," said Julia, as that gentleman joined the proposed party. "What are we ladies without you lords of creation?"

"Much, every way," said De Lisle, laughing.

"I hope you mean it in a good sense," said Julia.

"I mean that you and Miss Harcourt are too fertile in conversation to need my contributions."

"Conversation has certainly prospered without you," said Sarah, "but how much more with you!"

"It can never flag where you are, Miss Harcourt," said Julia.

"Not when you are present to call it out," said Sarah.

"I see you mean to be pleased with each other, and am only surprised that your acquaintance did not begin sooner."

"Custom would impute the fault to the older resident, I suppose," said Julia.

"It is not your fault, Miss Julia. Our social relations have taken us in opposite directions."

"True, contiguity of location seldom unites those of opposite tastes," said De Lisle; "but you have tastes alike, I think, and will easily coälesce."

"I mean it shall not be my fault if we do not," said Sarah.

"But it seems to us mysterious, Miss Harcourt, that we do not meet you in our places of amusement. It is precisely this circumstance, that I am interested in them and you are not, which has kept us so long unacquainted. Confluent currents are sure to mingle."

"Perhaps Miss Harcourt is too much occupied with literature, poetry, or the fine arts, to admit of her mingling in the scenes of which you speak," said De Lisle.

"I am fond of them, sir; but these do not keep me from the amusements of which you speak. I have no relish for them, and besides, they are many of them prejudicial to virtue and happiness. It would please my father to have me go, but as he sees me so happy without, he is content."

"No relish for amusements! That is very strange in one of your years," said De Lisle.

"I like amusement, sir, but not those of which you speak. I love to be out among the trees, the foliage, the flowers; to breathe the sweet breath of morning; to sport along the shore; and in many ways, at home and abroad, to recreate myself. It makes my heart purer, my head clearer, and my spirits more elastic. But the impure atmosphere of theatres, operas, assemblies, and all those scenes of exciting and crowded concourse, I could not endure. Besides, my conscience cannot approve what leads so many to dissipation and ruin."

"I can comprehend how you should acquire a distaste by staying away on account of the death of a friend," said Julia; "for I stayed at home once myself for this reason, till I lost my relish."

"I have lost no very near friend since my mother's death, some years ago. But that need not deter me, even if it had occurred within a week, provided it were right to go at all."

"Not your mother's death!" said De Lisle.

"My mother's death was more joyful than gloomy, and interposed no barrier to any consistent recreation."

"In what respect was it joyful?" said Julia.

"Because it was the end of a troubled and the beginning of a blissful life."

"Your mother died in the Church?" said De Lisle.

"She died in the faith of a Christian, sir, with heaven distinctly in view, and the certainty of happy society above. If your mother left you to visit the friends of her youth, you might regret her absence, but, at the same time, you would be glad of the pleasure she had in prospect. This pleasure I feel in the death of my mother."

"I never saw a person die," said Julia; "I could not endure the sight."

"My dear Miss Julia, you would not say so, if you had seen my mother die."

"What was remarkable in her dying?" inquired De Lisle.

In answer Sarah frankly stated the facts already mentioned, adding, "My amusement I find in living to die thus."

"A beautiful death!" said Julia, wiping her falling tears.

"A wonderful death!" said De Lisle, still more affected. "Pray, Miss Harcourt, what is the secret of dying thus? I should be glad to have such a death too."

"Faith in the gospel is the only secret. It is the faith of meeting friends that makes us so happy under the fatigue of a journey to the home of our childhood. Dying would be insupportable without the faith of heavenly society."

They were here interrupted by the inquiry at the door for Miss Harcourt; and, in a moment more, a poor but neatly-dressed girl of fourteen or fifteen entered the room, and said, with tears in her eyes, that her mother, she feared, was dying, and would be glad to see Miss Harcourt.

"Where does your mother live?" inquired Sarah.

"Sixty-five, Blank-street, in the third story. Go up two flights of stairs, and when you reach the landing of the second, enter the left-hand door."

This was said with much modesty, and with the signs of some deep and incurable sorrow.

"What ails your mother, my child?" inquired Sarah.

"O, I don't know," said the child, the tears beginning to flow amain; "she is sick; her breath is almost gone, and the fever is burning her up. Will you come, miss?"

"Certainly. Will it do in the morning?"

"O, I 'm afraid that would be too late!" said the girl.

"Very well; I will be there in an hour."

"Not so soon; we shall not be through tea," said Julia.

"Well, it will not be much over an hour, I think," added Sarah, as the child left.

"How dare you go to a strange place in the night?" said Julia. "Perhaps some mischief is intended you, or there is pestilence in the house."

"I shall take measures to assure myself on these points," said Sarah. "I am not without experience in these matters."

"You speak of the certainty of entering into better society at death, Miss Harcourt," said De Lisle, anxious to

resume the conversation. "I cannot see any such basis of certainty as we feel on visiting friends. It is true I believe in the Christian religion, and in the soul's immortality. But it affords me no such grounds of realization as that of meeting absent friends. We have seen those friends, have enjoyed the fruition of their society, and thus have in our minds a basis for realization. Those who have tasted a delicious fruit once can anticipate what it will be again. But we have no such experience of heavenly society. Dying is necessarily a plunge in the dark."

"Mr. De Lisle, one fact has escaped you," said Sarah.

"What is that, Miss Harcourt?"

"Heaven, to the believer, *is* a present inward experience. It is the love of God 'shed abroad in his heart;' it is 'Christ in him the hope of glory;' it is being 'filled with all the fulness of God.' What these passages of the Bible involve is heaven, whether enjoyed here or in another life. It is a mind in harmony with itself and all its relations. And what can heaven be but that?"

"But how is it possible to derive so much enjoyment from a purely ideal good?" inquired De Lisle.

"It is not ideal, sir; it is positive; it is substantial. Is the happiness of a *mind* in health any more ideal than that of a healthy *body?* That is a morbid state of mind which is never satisfied in itself, but is always craving outward sources of excitement. Happiness and hope are the development of life from within, like the enlargement of a growing tree; but pleasures, in the usual sense of that term, are but the leaves appended to a tree of wax. You grasp them, and they crumble in your hands."

"Then the state of your affections in reference to God and heaven gives you a distaste for the gayeties of the town."

"Yes; I am kept from them by the force of superior attractions. I might think many of these amusements perfectly innocent. It is so with dancing. I would dance if I needed such an auxiliary of my happiness; but I do not. Besides, I observe that those who have a craving for such modes of enjoyment are betrayed into what is acknowledged on all hands to be criminal. Extreme devotion to cards ends in gambling. The excitements of the theatre lead to drinking and drunkenness. These pleasures are all seeds, which grow up vices; and I do not feel myself at liberty to sow such a harvest. If you could see what I have, during my short stay in your city, I am certain that you would think as I do on these subjects."

As soon as they had taken tea, Sarah excused herself, to fulfil her engagement, and De Lisle insisted upon accompanying her. Julia, too, was so much interested in the case, that she proposed to go with them. A carriage was ordered, and they all went together. When they arrived at 65 Blank-street, they found it a large, old-fashioned house, once the home of opulence, but now converted into dens for the poor and degraded. The doors were battered and broken, with locks and latches gone, and no protection against rain or robbers. The party entered the hall, but not a light was to be seen within. De Lisle felt his way in the darkness, till he reached the foot of the stairs, and began to ascend, the ladies following. Julia's heart sunk within her. On the first landing they were met by the poor girl who had come for them, having in her hand a piece of broken earthenware, with a small amount of oil in it, and a wick, emitting a feeble light. This served rather to render the darkness and desolation more visible. At length they entered the left-hand door of the upper landing, when they were met with a gust of

March wind, blowing through the broken panes, which extinguished their light, and enveloped them in total darkness. Sarah, used to such scenes, begged her companions not to be alarmed.

"Ma! ma!" said the girl; "do you hear?"

"Lizzy, love, is that you?" said one, with labored breathing, who seemed scarcely conscious; "is that you, Lizzy?"

"Yes, ma; the lady is come; she is here."

"Are you sick, my good woman?" said Sarah.

"O, yes; very sick. Who 's speaking to me?"

"Miss Harcourt, that you sent me for," said the child; "she is come to see you, ma."

"O, Miss Harcourt, I 'm so glad you are here! This is a house of suffering and death. And you have been so kind to Mrs. Darby, and she has said so much to me about you, that I hoped you 'd be an angel of mercy to me, also. O, I 'm so suffering! my heart 's bursting, and I have no one on earth to look to!"

"My dear woman, you must look to your Father in heaven," said Sarah, with tones of tenderness that went to the heart.

"O, I have! I have!" said the woman; "and I seemed to feel that he had referred me to you, as the messenger of his mercy to me."

"Miss Harcourt, you must have a light," said De Lisle; "I will go and order one."

"I will go with you," said Julia, trembling in every limb; adding, in a whisper, "Miss Harcourt, you must go, too. It is dangerous for you to remain here alone."

"Not in the least," said Sarah; "God's poor are here, and he will watch over us in taking care of them. You had better order a light, Mr. De Lisle. But wait a moment.

What have you here, my good woman?—any food? clothing to keep you warm? What do you need most?"

"We have nothing here, you angel; no food, no fuel, no lights, and not clothing to keep us warm," said the woman.

"The shops are open yet, Mr. De Lisle. Please order lights, ready-cooked food, fuel, and warm blankets. Here's my purse," added Sarah, feeling her way, to put it in his hand.

"No, no; I have enough," replied De Lisle, in tones which indicated emotion.

"Ma, your poor Mary's cold, cold,—O, how cold! Lie close to me, ma! I'm so cold!" said a child, feebly, from the opposite side of the room, with a rattling in breathing, as if its throat was full of phlegm.

"I have you in my bosom, my tender love! there; don't my Mary feel a little warmer?" replied the mother, with a motion of pressing her little one to her bosom. Meantime, the sound of heavy breathing was heard in other parts of the room, and the atmosphere would have been intolerable, but for the constant currents of night air flowing through it. De Lisle and Julia hastened after supplies for this house of want, while Sarah occupied her time in repeating passages of scripture most appropriate to the case of the poor woman, and in offering prayer for those higher supplies for the soul which God alone can impart. The absent ones soon returned with a cheerful light, followed by a porter with fuel, food, blankets, and everything to meet the present necessity. The fire was soon lighted, the broken panes stopped with a blanket, and so much comfort as warmth could bestow was afforded to the unhappy inmates. But such a scene as the light revealed beggars description. Mrs. Andrews, the sick woman, was lying on a pallet of straw in one part of the room, without a

covering to keep her warm, while her breathing was like the whistling tubes of an organ. On the opposite side of the room lay Mrs. Prindle, in much the same condition, with four children by her, one of whom was now found to be gasping its last. Poor Mrs. Prindle, seeing the state of her child, sprang to her feet, the other three children following, all in rags and wretchedness; and the scene which ensued may be better imagined than described.

"O, Mary! Mary! do speak to your mother once more! Dear little murdered one, will you not look up? will you not kiss your ma?"

Then, seizing the dead child, she pressed it to her bosom, as if the warmth of her person would infuse life into the cold clay. The children, meantime, uttered the most doleful plaints, and it was some time before quiet could be restored. Food was offered the suffering family, which, in spite of their grief, they laid hold of with hungry voracity, their haggard features telling too plainly how long such a solace had been denied them.

The heavy breathing was found to come from Andrews and his two sons, the husband and children of the sick lady, and also from Prindle, the father of the dead child. All these remained still in the sleep of drunkenness. Sarah now inquired of Mrs. Andrews what had brought them to such a pitch of wretchedness.

"An insatiable love of amusement, ending in drunkenness," she said. "My husband is a carpenter, and had a prosperous business in Connecticut, our native state. His leisure he then spent in public houses, drinking temperately, and finding pleasure in every way he could. Our sons would accompany him, and they gradually fell into the same habits. I did what I could to induce them to read, to find pleasure at

home; but all to no purpose. At length, Mr. Andrews thought this city would be a better place for his business, and we removed here. This was our ruin. The temptations to pleasure were too much for my husband and sons, and they plunged still deeper and deeper in dissipation, and did less and less for our support. Dear Lizzy and I supported the family by binding shoes, till I took cold and could work no longer; since which she has been our only support. Driven out of house and home, we were taken in by Prindle, an associate of my husband. He could not pay the rent of his room, and resorted to this expedient for relieving himself. The discomfort of this place has aggravated my disease, and God only knows what the end will be!"

"You see, Mr. De Lisle," said Sarah, on their return home, "how unsafe it is for a man to feel that he cannot content himself without artificial excitements."

"But why should they go to such extremes? why not stop at a reasonable point?" said De Lisle.

"That is the question,—why not?" replied Sarah. "It is because the appetite that craves indulgences of this kind is an unhealthy one, and must end in evil. It may not bring all to such a garret, but it will inevitably be followed with damage in some way. Theatre-going leads to drinking, and drinking to theatre-going; card-playing to gambling; nocturnal assemblies to nocturnal dissipation and premature death; and thus the wrecks of family, and ruined characters and fortunes, are strewed around us without stint or measure."

"Can nothing be done to induce Prindle and the Andrewses to change their habits?" inquired Julia, with genuine concern.

"A very hard case," said De Lisle, shaking his head.

"Yes; much may be done, and much more still might be,

if the state had not placed its licensed temptations at every corner."

"How will you go to work?" inquired De Lisle. "You may rely upon my support, Miss Harcourt, in anything you think proper to attempt."

"And mine, too," added Julia. "I had no idea of what is done and suffered around us."

"Well, since you are so good as to refer the plan to me, I tell you at once, we must be on hand to-morrow morning by seven o'clock. We must steal the march of the first dram. Prindle and the Andrewses will awake with the horrors. The death within their doors will concur with the reäction of drunkenness to bring on such a morning as they have never seen. Their only means of relief will be to drown themselves in the bottle. Our business is to step in at that precise moment, and do all we can to impart other comforts, and inspire them with other sources of hope."

Accordingly it was arranged to meet at 65 Blank-street, so early as seven of the next morning. Sarah was there somewhat in advance of her friends. She met Andrews, senior, in the hall, with bottle in hand, and inquired of him how his wife did.

"A little better, I hope."

"Be so good as to show me the way to your room. I fear I cannot find it again."

"And have you been there before?" said Andrews.

"Yes,— last night."

"O, you are the young lady who has relieved our sufferings," said Andrews; "I 'll go back with you."

"Yes, Mr. Andrews, my father is repairing our homestead, and I have come to engage you to work for us."

When Sarah entered the room, the first object that met

her view was the pale face of the dead child. Its father stood over it, apparently with the premonitory symptoms of delirium tremens. The two young Andrewses looked stupid and besotted. Mrs. Andrews was evidently better, relieved by food and a warmer room. Little Lizzy had already begun her day's work, now the only source of the family's support. Mrs. Prindle and her children were alleviated in body by food, but sorely afflicted in mind at the death of poor dear Mary. Mr. De Lisle and Julia soon arrived, accompanied by a physician. Prindle had by this time become more raving · and the physician, after prescribing to Mrs. Andrews, took him into his own carriage, with much persuasion and some force, and conveyed him to the hospital. Here he was confined several weeks; and measures were taken, when he came out, to induce him to sign the temperance pledge. This he did; and, by the efforts of Miss Harcourt, who never lost sight of him, he was furnished with a regular business, by which he supported his own family in comfort. De Lisle took it upon himself to provide places for the young Andrewses, while Sarah kept their father in her employ until he had become somewhat weaned from the cup, when he also took the pledge. The two families were soon in comfortable circumstances, and the only difficulty was in keeping them so, by removing the temptations to strong drink. But how can this be done, with our present drinking habits and liquor laws?

CHAPTER XVIII.

HIGH LIFE BELOW STAIRS.

"Her sons all drank a little; and one of them — the first boy she had — frequently came home lively, as she called it." — THE ADVOCATE.

"A pestilent tongue she had, that the poor husband dreaded above all things under the sun." — SIR ROGER L'ESTRANGE.

THESE incidents and conversations opened upon De Lisle new ideas of life. It had a purpose of humanity, a work of faith and labor of love, and a patience of hope, and not merely the gratification of present desires. He did, indeed, fulfil an engagement to attend the theatre with Harry Howard, the succeeding evening. That young gentleman had been graduated to a career of high living, and was fulfilling his destiny on a scale that promised a speedy fall. De Lisle had no real congeniality with him; but still, they often met in their rounds of pleasure, and often enjoyed together a social glass. Howard saw in him this evening something unusual. He was abstracted, and seemed little interested in the brilliant scene enacting before them.

"De Lisle," said Howard, "what the deuce ails you? Are you in love?"

"Does love make one insensible to what is passing around him?"

"Certainly. That is its first symptom. It wraps the mind in its own delicious ideas, to the exclusion of all others."

"Then, Howard, you must set me down in love."

"But who is the happy object of your passion?"

"It is like no other with which I ever met on earth."

"That is the universal story, and amounts to just nothing at all."

"You know, Howard, we lately discussed Gibbon's account of the spread of Christianity, when I expressed the conviction that it might be accounted for on the ordinary principles of cause and effect; but I now see reasons for revoking that decision."

"Pray, what has that to do with love?"

"Much, very much, with the kind which has affected me."

"Then it is the love of the brethren, I suppose," said Howard, with a sneer.

"I wish it might be that, if it is all like the specimen I have seen."

"What specimen have you seen? Is it a male or a female specimen,—a real or an ideal one?"

"O, you joke in a case wherein I feel it to be profane."

"You are really pious, then?" said Howard, shrinking from him, with instinctive dread.

"If I were pious, I suppose I should not be here."

"Not here! Can anything, deserving the name of piety, keep one from such a glorious play as this?"

"If you knew you could be happier somewhere else, could do much more good, and prevent much more evil, do you think you would be here?"

"That's impossible."

"I thought so once myself," said De Lisle, seriously; "but I now have reason to think otherwise."

"And the reason that makes you think otherwise has convinced you also that miraculous agency was necessary in the establishment and propagation of Christianity."

"Precisely so. I have seen Christianity on such wise as falls not within the ordinary scope of human nature. Nothing

so pure, so bland, so blissful, so free from cant and sectarianism, so full of good-will to all, so self-sacrificing to reclaim the vicious and make the miserable happy, could arise from that grovelling, selfish thing, which I have found human nature to be."

"Is it a lady, or a gentleman?"

"A lady."

"Is she beautiful?"

"Yes, as the morning star, and lovely as spring."

"Rich?"

"An heiress, I believe."

"Respectably connected?"

"Of one of the best families in this republican land."

"Then I 'll be bound, De Lisle, something besides *brotherly* love has to do with your feelings in the case."

"But, Howard, what if you were to add to the most beautiful, rich, accomplished, respectable and every way desirable, young lady you ever saw, the embellishments of a character so superior to these advantages as to cast them all into the shade; with what feelings would you regard her?"

"What are these embellishments which thus render all the ordinary food of love insipid?"

"Labors in behalf of such objects of wretchedness as you have never conceived, and faith that makes death a triumph."

"Faith! faith of any kind, except conjugal faith, kills love. I would shun it as I would a pestilence. It has nothing to recommend it but cant, hypocrisy and prudery."

"But, suppose you were to see a piety cheerful, bland, tender, confiding, attentive to the happiness of all, even in things with which it could not agree, and so happy in the communion of the pure and the heavenly, and in exercising all the virtues which adorn and ennoble human nature, as to lose the

relish of those pleasures on which you and I are wasting our fortune and our lives; what would you say of it?"

"I should say the picture is too perfect to be real."

"Well, if you had an idea that it was real, in a lady of our acquaintance, could she have so many of those qualities which usually elicit love as to lead you to merge your feelings towards her in that passion?"

"The plague on such a lady! Let her seek her lovers among the angels, where the ancient beauties found theirs."

"O, you are not serious, Howard. It is my opinion that no young man could be happy in such a love, who did not possess, in some good degree, the same characteristics."

This sentiment of De Lisle is no doubt true. Marriage between persons whose views and feelings on the subject of religion are radically different does not promise happiness.

Though these sketches of Miss Harcourt's life in New York extend over a period of a few years, yet it was a much less time than this that Douglass remained ignorant of her fate. The pain of suspense which she felt till she heard from him was increased by the fear of having done him a wrong, by allowing herself, for any cause, to be separated from him, at a crisis of their intercourse so delicate and peculiar. As to the effect upon him, she was long left to conjecture. Still, her plans of doing good and her confidence in God preserved her from unavailing regrets. She made few acquaintances beyond the immediate calls of duty. Her introduction to De Lisle and Julia, uncongenial as they were in some respects, proved a real comfort to her. The nature of some does more than the grace of others to make them agreeable companions. Mrs. Dunstable, a woman of vulgar ideas and a low origin, but of sufficient wealth, inherited and accumulated, to support her insufferable pretensions to high life, illustrated the truth of

this remark, if her connection with the church could be received as a sign of grace. She was volatile and pretending; a saint in the winter and a sinner in the summer; a wine-drinker, but a temperance talker; a pretended refrainer from worldly amusements in her own city, but mad after them in Paris, or when abroad; a professed martyr to her husband's impiety, while he was really so to her tongue. She monopolized to herself the good of her family, and charged the bad upon her ungodly husband. This woman attended the ministry of Mr. Topliff, who was also Miss Harcourt's pastor, and it was thus their acquaintance began. Mrs. Dunstable's ambition to be found in distinguished families, like that to which Sarah belonged, was inflamed by the consciousness of her own vulgar pedigree.

"I fear, Miss Harcourt, you keep yourself too much excluded," said Mrs. Dunstable, at her first call.

"I am happy in seclusion," replied Sarah.

"O, dear!" said Mrs. Dunstable, with a peculiar wriggle of her commanding person. "I s'pose I should be, if I had n't a husband who is always dragging me out."

"It is right that you should do all you can, conscientiously, to please your husband."

"It 's a bore, after all, to have an ungodly husband, who is always interfering with one's religion. One finds it hard to be good under such circumstances; at least *I* do," said Mrs. Dunstable, with a smirk of her large face.

"Is he unwilling you should attend your church?"

"Yes, *my* church, for he has taken me to that detestable place where this fool of a Topliff preaches, merely because he knows it plagues me. *My* minister is that dear, good man, Dr. Turnsol. Have you never heard him, Miss Harcourt?"

"I have not had that pleasure. I am quite satisfied with our own minister."

"You surprise me, Miss Harcourt. How can you endure his dinging against wine? Not that I drink; but, when I hear temperance touched upon, I like to have it kindy softly, as my dear Dr. Turnsol does. He now and then takes a glass for his stomach's sake, and his often infirmities. But this buckram Topliff! you might as well turn melted brimstone down his throat. I can't bear him. My husband don't like him any better than I; but he will go there, just to be ugly. O, dear! what a sad thing it is for a pious woman to have an ungodly husband!"

"A trial, no doubt; but a consistent life may win him."

"La me! how can one lead a consistent life, when one has no help at home? I feel the need of being comforted by preaching the more from my unhappy condition at home. But, then, to go and be knocked over the head about wine by Topliff is too bad. I do run away, to get a little comfort from dear Dr. Turnsol, and I will; it's of no use; I can't live without it."

"I observe your attendance is not regular, but did not know before the cause."

"Wal; if I had n't run away, to get some comfort from Dr. Turnsol, I believe Mr. Topliff and my ungodly husband together would have driv all the religion out of me."

"It is well to have some relief," said Sarah, thoughtfully, wondering what sort of a woman this Mrs. Dunstable could be.

"You must come and pass an evening with me, Miss Harcourt; and you may do me some good, in all my trouble."

Sarah was in doubt about returning the call of a woman whose conversation seemed so very objectionable; but, hoping

better than appeared, she did at length go to pass an evening at her house. When she arrived, she was, by a mistake of the servant, ushered into the same room with Mr. Dunstable, whom, to her surprise, she found with Bible in hand, and reading with much interest. He received her with great cordiality, when Sarah apologized for the interruption.

"Not at all; not at all, Miss Harcourt; happy to see you, — I have often seen you at church."

"Your countenance, sir, is familiar to me," said Sarah, "though I have not had the pleasure of speaking to you before."

"I was delighted with our minister's allusion, last Sabbath, to St. Paul's advice to Timothy to drink wine. You know that is used by wine-drinkers in justification of their practice; and Mr. Topliff, you remember, used it to prove that wine ought not to be used, except as a medicine. He said that Timothy could not have used it as a beverage, or Paul would not have recommended it for his infirmities. In that case it would have been unnecessary; and that it was a remarkable evidence of abstinence from wine among the early Christian pastors, that the authority of an apostle was necessary to induce one of them to use it as a medicine."

"I remember well that passage in his sermon, and I thought it conclusive, too," replied Sarah. "Timothy's religion obviously deterred him from the use of wine as a beverage. Nor does the apostle correct him in this, but only advises it as a medicine."

"You are right, Miss Harcourt. I have been examining into the subject, and fully believe that the apostles founded their churches on the principle of abstinence from wine as a beverage. Timothy's abstinence must have resulted from the instruction he had received, as is evinced by the fact that

the apostle felt it to be necessary so far to modify that instruction as to allow wine for medicinal purposes."

By this time a colored servant came into the room and said, "Missus will please walk into de libraire."

Accordingly, Sarah, taking leave of Mr. Dunstable, followed the servant into the library. This was a small room adjoining a larger one, from which she heard many voices, as of persons over their cards and their wine. She waited some time, but no Mrs. Dunstable appeared. Soon, Dr. and Mrs. Turnsol were ushered in, and, by mistake, opened the larger room door, when Mrs. Dunstable fairly screamed out, and, leaving her place at one of the card-tables, rushed to the door, saying, "La me, Dr. Turnsol! is it you? Just step into the library, please. Dear Miss Harcourt, how are you? Happy to see you. O, dear! what a dreadful thing it is to spend one's life so! all hurly-burly,— worldly people amusing themselves at whist, which my conscience cannot approve. How can a pious woman help herself, when her husband is ungodly, and teaches her children so, and makes his house a hell upon earth? My sons will have cards, and there is no use of my saying a word. O, dear! O, dear! I'm in the furnace! in the furnace, Dr. Turnsol!" Thus ran the voluble tongue of the excited Mrs. Dunstable, her large cheeks flushed with wine.

"Yes, I know," said Dr. Turnsol, pressing Mrs. Dunstable with one hand, and laying the other on his heart with a deep sigh and a most affectionate wink of the eye. "I *feel* for you, my dear friend. Your situation is very, very trying."

Pop went a champagne bottle in another room, which made Mrs. Dunstable dodge as if she had been shot at, exclaiming, "Good heavens! what's that? O, dear! Miss Harcourt,

what a dreadful thing it is to have a worldly husband, to fill one's house with such gay company!"

"Indeed," said Sarah, hardly knowing what to reply, "your husband does not seem to join his company. I found him reading his Bible."

"Did you see Dunstable?" said she, with another start. "Reading his Bible? la me! an't that a joke? Dunstable reading his Bible! ha! ha! ha! O, fie! Miss Harcourt; it's all a sham; it's to get clubs to throw at me, the most persecuted wife in town. The more he reads, the deeper he sinks in the mire."

"Yes," said Mrs. Turnsol, with a sigh; "the deeper he sinks in the mire. How wicked it is of him to keep you from hearing my husband!"

"It's a burning shame of him, when he knows that without your husband's sermons my religion goes out like fire without fuel. Dr. Turnsol, don't you feel that goneness in your stomach?"

"But a trifle, dear Mrs. Dunstable," said the doctor, with a sorrowful expression of the face.

"I see, I see, doctor; Cuff, there!" added Mrs. Dunstable, calling to a servant just then passing the open door; "bring a glass of Madeira. Dr. Turnsol, it'll do you good; I know it will."

"Thank you, Mrs. Dunstable; it does sometimes relieve my goneness," said the doctor, quaffing a glass of old Madeira with a gusto.

By this time the black servant announced that the children were ready for the dancing-school exhibition.

"Hush, you fool!" said Mrs. Dunstable; "what do you come to tell me that for? O, dear! my friends, what a dread-

ful thing it is to have an ungodly husband! One's children must be brought up just as one does not choose."

"We understand. Your husband forces you to send your children to the dancing-school," said the doctor.

"Yes, my dear doctor, that 's my trouble. Those dear little immortals are sent to dance themselves to ruin. O, dear! O, dear!"

The children are no sooner off than the servant calls out again, "Missus' carge is at de door, to tak Missus to de op'ration."

"What operation are you going to see?" inquired Mrs. Turnsol.

"The fool!" replied Mrs. Dunstable, greatly embarrassed; "he means the opera. O, dear! that 's the misery of having a worldly husband. One 's compelled to go here and go there, right in the face and eyes of one's conscience."

Out rushed the card-party, all dressed, and ready to accompany Mrs. Dunstable to the opera.

"You see how it is here at our house, Miss Harcourt,—a perfect bedlam! I did hope to enjoy with you a quiet, pleasant evening, in talking about good things; but one's husband, you know, will control."

Sarah, grieved and disgusted, could not refrain from saying, "Your husband is certainly a temperance man, and you ought to be thankful for that."

"La me! that 's his old-fashioned way of talking. He 's no taste for anything but to be ugly, and plague me."

This may be an extreme case; but it was an introduction to others in sufficient number to convince Miss Harcourt that the drinking habit, in professedly Christian families, is one of the greatest obstructions to the cause of reform. This remark applies with special force to the clergy and church-

members in England, whose use of intoxicating drinks, in various forms, is almost as general as that of tea and coffee. There, temperance meetings are made up, for the most part, of the lower orders of society. There, the clergy do not give the cause their hearty support. They drink themselves, and hold the cup to their neighbor's lips. Intoxicating drink is common at ecclesiastical gatherings and entertainments. Consequently, there the temperance reform is far behind what it is with us. Sarah found in Mrs. Dunstable, Dr. Turnsol, and even in her own father, far more difficult subjects to deal with than in the Andrewses and Prindles, because the vice of the latter was acknowledged, while that of the former was sustained by a delusive feeling of virtue.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DYING CONFESSION.

"'T is a burden
Too heavy for a man that hopes for heaven."

SHAKSPEARE.

SPRING began again to breathe its influence over Forestdale. The escaping frost made the trees explode like the pistols of charging dragoons. The leaping brooks bore off, rejoicing, the liquefied crystal drops and fleecy robes of winter. The robin and blue-bird resumed their sweet song, and the hawk and eagle their gyrations in the upper air. The flowing sap of the maple yielded nectar, and replenished the farm-house larder with its delicious crystallizations. Little girls were out among the budding trees gathering wild-flowers,

and the Queen of May was wielding over her joyous train her blooming sceptre. Groups of stilted boys were taking uneasy steps with their elongated legs, while others were hurling and striking the bounding ball, and pitching the leaping quoit. The plough, spade and hoe, resumed their work of preparing for seeding, while the lambs leaped in the pasture, the calves frisked beside their dams, the foal whinnied after its absent mother, and the genius of herb and forest bounded forth from her wintry hiding-place, clad in her leafy robes, all spotted with pearl, vermilion, and gold. The whole scene was as buoyant and beautiful as if no battles had been fought, no intrigues practised, no agony of abused appetite had been inflicted or endured, and no competitions for social preëminence had disturbed the fair face of the world.

Would that nature's lessons were not lost upon man! Would that the forests and leaves of his beautiful country-seat had charmed Skampton into tilling the soil, or into a business consistent with public virtue, or into almost anything, rather than this endless competition for general influence, and this coërcion of the future into the exact limit of the past! Would that Gilfort could imbibe truth from the inspirations of nature; and Douglass, senior, learn temperance from the rills that water his lands; and that Bludgeon would temper his zeal with love! Nature is a great repository of virtue and wisdom to those who are willing to use it as such.

Society had evidently improved under the labors of young Douglass. Private quarrels were settled, instruction imparted to those who had not enjoyed it before, books and reading were far more common among the people, and the advantages even of an humble, informal Christian pastorship were visible on every hand. Charles was active and

laborious, in spite of the inward sorrow which preyed upon him from day to day. The evil of having a drunken father seemed to him great enough without being hurled, on its account, from the position in society to which he felt himself entitled. He made frequent calls on his people, to afford aid and advice to those who needed.

How touching are the scenes which fall under the eye of a pastor! How much does he meet with, in the most retired communities as well as in city parishes, to teach him the need of the temperance reformation! It is owing to the constant contact of ministers with the evils of alcohol, as well as to the dictates of their religion, that a portion of them were the first to move in this reformation, and that they have been, throughout, its most active and zealous coadjutors. While Miss Harcourt was encountering this vice in New York, and Bludgeon in his field of labor, Douglass, in his lowly parish, was witnessing some of its most dismal effects.

One of his families was burnt out by means of a fire kindled by a drunken father, and three dear little children perished in the flames. They were a poor family, and lived in a little log cottage too remote for help, when the devouring element lighted on them. The mother, the previous evening, went up stairs, and put her three little ones all in the same bed, while a fourth was still at the breast. She snugly tucked them up, heard them lisp their evening prayer for dear father and mother and baby, and then, with the fond maternal kiss, bade them good-night. At midnight her husband returned; and, lighting a candle, started to climb the ladder to the room above, where the children were,— stairs they had none,— when his clumsy, noisy movements awoke his wife. "Henry, be careful of that light, or you 'll touch something

above, and set us all in a flame," she said, fearing what his condition might be.

"Mam, mind your own business!" said he, with the thick, defective articulation of a drunkard.

"O, well, dear Henry, you must pardon my anxiety about our dear little ones; they are in a room with so many combustible materials," said Mrs. Niles, for such was the name of the family, while a tear, hid in the darkness, stole down her stricken cheeks at the now discovered fact that her husband had come home drunk. Niles retained sense enough to desire to conceal a bottle of whiskey which he had brought home with him, and he went up the ladder for that purpose. He soon staggered his way down, blew out his light, and threw himself on the bed, in his clothes, and soon sunk into a profound sleep. Mrs. Niles also dozed,—how long she could not tell,—when she was awaked by the crackling flames of the burning house above. She screamed, sprang out of bed, and, by a superhuman effort, mounted the ladder, and brought down the little bed in which her children slept, with them all enfolded in it; nor did she stay till she reached the open air. But, alas! it was too late. They had been literally suffocated and roasted alive. The fire had flamed up into the roof, which, in a room of that kind, was the same as the ceiling, and had produced an intense heat around the children, without yet kindling on their bed. When Douglass reached the spot, the next morning, the children still lay in the bed, just as their mother had brought them down, all clasped in each other's arms, just as they went to sleep, while their charred fingers projected out like burnt sticks, in the same form as when the fire converted them into senseless clay.

"O, my dear babes! — my sweet, precious babes!" was

the only reply of the frantic mother, to words of consolation from her young pastor. "O, do look once more on the face of your mother, my dear darlings!" prostrating herself on the charred remains of objects so tenderly loved.

"My dear madam," said Douglass, with tears, "God knew how much better he can take care of your children than you could, and, in love, he has taken them to himself."

"O, my dear, dear, precious ones, let your mother kiss you once more! O, cold, cold!" and then, with wailings to break one's heart who heard, she lifted herself up, as if unconscious of all that was said or done around her.

Her husband stood like a statue, partly besotted with strong drink, and partly confounded and stupefied by the greatness of the calamity in which his miserable habits had involved his family. The event produced a powerful sensation in town, and Douglass used it to show the people how utterly insecure property and life are, with a large portion of every community, under our present license laws. "We have legislated on this subject," he said, "from the first years of our colonial history, as if intoxicating drinks were an enemy to society that must be guarded against, and yet no effectual restraints have ever been devised. The enemy is now more rampant than ever, so far as the traffic is concerned, and will continue to be, till a cordon of law is thrown around to make the sale as a beverage impossible. We must adopt the summary method of pouring into the gutter liquors kept for such a purpose. No quarter must be shown to the enemy. He must be dragged to the light from all his hiding-places, and doomed to instant annihilation. Humanity demands this. Civil society owes it as a debt to those whom it seeks to protect. More than half its burdens of crime and pauperage come from the present sale and use of intoxicating

drinks; and it has a right to relieve itself of the burden by stringent laws. Is it not as just and constitutional to remove temptation from the drunkard as to remove him from temptation by imprisonment? In the one case you *prevent* the crime, in the other you *punish* it. In the one case you leave a father and husband to his daily routine of virtuous labor, to support a dependent family; but in the other you first torture and degrade them by crime, and then you deprive them of support, and compel them to starve or beg, or go to the poorhouse."

This speech had a powerful effect in Forestdale, and almost every man in it signed a petition to the Legislature for the passage of the Maine Law.

On another occasion, Douglass was called to the death-bed of a young man whose intemperate habits and consequent exposure had brought on a quick consumption. He seemed anxious, as if he had something on his mind to disclose before dying, but which he felt constrained to keep secreted. Douglass visited him daily, but still could elicit nothing satisfactory. He was making a plunge in the dark. At length, all seemed over with him; his eyes were closed, and pieces of money laid to keep them so, and his limbs duly disposed for burial. He revived, however, to the surprise of all, and, seeing Douglass by his side, he said, feebly,

"It is of no use; I must confess, or I cannot die in peace. Sir, I have been instigated to do you a great injury."

"What injury have you done *me*?" said Douglass, much surprised.

"I have taken a great number of letters from the post-office which were directed to you, and have burnt them."

"Burnt my letters? What could have induced you to do this?"

"You must ask me no questions on that point. The one who instigated the crime must do his own confessing. It is enough for me to confess the agency I have had in it."

"What motive had he for destroying my letters?"

"I do not fully understand that myself, though one thing I know, the letters were superscribed by a female hand; and I think some young lady is some way concerned in the case."

"Where were the letters post-marked?" inquired Douglass, to whom the idea now occurred that it involved an explanation of Miss Harcourt's strange disappearance, and still stranger silence.

"At New York, except one, which had the post-mark of Troy."

"Have you retained none of them?"

"None, except this name subscribed to one of them, which I retained as a matter of curiosity, thinking I might learn more about the person."

Douglass took a small piece of paper from the hand of the dying man, on which was written, in her own hand, the name of "Sarah Harcourt." After this confession, the young man sunk away, and soon died. Douglass stayed to attend his funeral, and also to inquire of the postmaster how his letters should have been disposed of in this manner. He could get no explanation, but made up his mind that a member of the family had delivered them, without the knowledge of the postmaster. He now flew to New York on the wings of steam, to unravel the entangled mystery. When he arrived, he was totally at a loss where to look for the fugitive family, as Harcourt had cut off all the clues to his concealment, so far as possible. He took lodgings at one of the principal hotels, and now devoted himself to the one object of finding

his lost one. Amid the thronged streets he felt a keener sense of loneliness than he had done in his wilderness home.

It occurred to him, at length, whether Sarah might not have made the acquaintance of some of the clergy; and he called on several, but could hear nothing. One of them had an indistinct impression that he had heard the name from some one,—he could not tell who, but believed it was Dr. Turnsol. Douglass, therefore, called on the doctor, and inquired if he had met with Miss Harcourt in his visits.

"Miss Harcourt—Miss Harcourt—" said the doctor, thoughtfully. "My dear," he added, to his chubby, red-faced wife, who that moment peeped in upon them, "was Harcourt the name of the young lady whom we met at Mrs. Dunstable's?"

"Yes; Harcourt was the name,—Sarah Harcourt,—a genteel miss, one of our aristocracy," said Mrs. Turnsol, and then moved off, with an air which seemed to say, "I'll not talk with you till I know who you are."

"Can you tell me where I shall find her?" inquired Charles.

"I cannot, indeed. You'll learn at Mrs. Dunstable's, 128 —— street. You'll excuse me, sir; am very much engaged; good-morning," said the doctor, and vanished.

Charles now hastened to 128 —— street, where he was met at the door by a colored servant, of whom he inquired for Mrs. Dunstable.

"Will gemman please walk in, till I sees?" said the servant, when her ladyship, hearing the inquiry, rushed to the door, to prevent the interruption of a call, abruptly asking,

"What do you want, sir?"

Charles stated the object of his call.

"I know the daughter. Follow up the Eighth Avenue a

long way, till you come to the Cock and Bull Tavern; there inquire, and you will learn particulars. Good-morning, sir."

Charles could not repress a smile at the hauteur with which this was said, by one who bore so many marks of a vulgar origin and character. He set off at once for the Cock and Bull,— a definite point to reach an indefinite one. A long way off it was, indeed,— far beyond the expanded bound of the great metropolis; and, when he reached it, he was directed onward still, to a certain lane lined with trees, adown which he was to go till he came opposite a gate, a lawn, and grounds covered by ornamental shrubbery. He finally reached the gate, and, finding it locked, and no porter near, sauntered down to where the lane terminated, on the bank of the North river. Here he stood, enjoying the watery view, and thinking, with palpitating heart, that the object of his search was so near, when, turning to look up stream, he saw Sarah on the beach, coming towards him. Both were alike taken by surprise, and felt themselves hardly able to endure the rush of emotions, though both succeeded in maintaining outward repose of manners.

"My dear Sarah, it is enough! I have seen you once more! This moment of bliss compensates all my sufferings."

"O, Charles! how could you neglect me so long? Why did you not answer my letters?"

"Your letters! not one ever reached me. Till this day I have been in suspense as to where you were, or whether the sight of me would be agreeable."

"Is it possible?" said Sarah, with blank astonishment. "I wrote you at Terracegreen, explaining the cause of our leaving so suddenly; I wrote you on the way; and I have written you from this place; till I found writing did no good."

"And yet, not one of your letters reached me; nor, singular as it may appear, could I learn where you had gone."

"How could this be?"

"The reason is plain; your letters have been intercepted," said Charles, detailing the facts of the death-bed confession.

"It is my mother's God has brought this about! He watches over us still. Blessed be the Lord, our Rock and our Deliverer!"

"It is even so, Sarah; had not the Lord been on our side, then had our enemies quickly swallowed us up."

"Gilfort has a hand in this. I mistrusted it long ago. And this letter has just fallen into my hands, to confirm my suspicions," added Sarah, taking a letter from her pocket, and reading as follows:

"MY DEAR SIR: My acquaintance in your family I deem the happiest event of my life. I desire to express the interest I feel in your happiness in *deed* as well as in *word*. It is this which induces me to impart to you a fact which you are entitled to know. A young man who is unworthy of your confidence has made love to your daughter at a second interview, and in a most offensive manner. I have written to the Honorable Michael Skampton on the subject, who will acquaint you with the character of this fellow, and of his family. His father is a drunkard. If, in my zeal to serve you, and to do as I would be done by, I seem, in any respect, to overstep the bounds of propriety, please impute it to a defect of judgment, and not of intention.

"Your obedient servant,

"SAMUEL GILFORT."

"Did this letter lead to your flight?" inquired Charles, coolly.

"No, I think not. I cannot suppose my papa capable of being so influenced by such a piece of impertinence, from such a man."

"You may be sure that, aided by something you have not seen from Skampton, whom Gilfort speaks of giving my character to your father, caused it. Skampton, not content with ruining my father, is bent, also, upon the destruction of his son. But we are in the hands of God, Sarah, and there is all my hope."

"Yet how should Gilfort know of what happened in Spring Arbor, at our 'second interview'? That is the mystery."

"Know it! Just as he knew how to intercept my letters; just as he knew how to rob poor Dobson, last winter, of which I have lately heard; just as he knew how to inveigle around him his deluded colonists in the West, under the notion of building them up into a new kingdom and priesthood. He knows and does everything by the witchery of his influence over those whom he takes in his toils. This dying young man confessed his own guilt, but would not reveal the serpent whose charm even death could not dissolve."

"Papa always speaks of this letter with contempt."

"Does he not object to your acquaintance with me?"

"No, never. Yet I mistrust there is something; but what, I cannot tell."

"Was it *necessary* that you should leave the plantation so suddenly?"

"Papa thought so, and so it appeared, when we reached town. Yet, I am in a maze about the letter I left for you at the mansion."

The young couple now moved towards the house, where tea was soon announced. But no Mr. Harcourt appeared; and Sarah was surprised to learn from Charles that the front

gate was locked, and no porter on hand. Soon, a letter came from Harcourt, stating that he had been unexpectedly called to Baltimore, and should not return for some days. He was a peculiar man in his notion of influencing women in matters of love. He did not deem it possible to succeed in it by open measures. As to Sarah, especially, he knew too well her firmness, and that the reasons he had to urge against Douglass would not have weight with her. "A woman's heart," he said, "was like the paddy's pig, that must be made to believe that you would go to Cork, if you would drive him to Dublin. She always works by contraries." He never spoke to Sarah against Charles, never intimated an unwillingness that he should visit her; but seemed rather to go the other way, because he deemed this the only method of breaking up the match.

He would not see Douglass in his last visit to the plantation, and avoided him on this occasion, because he wished to escape the necessity of saying yes or no to a request for his consent. He had learned the fact of his arrival in town by some means, which accounted for the gate being locked, and his own escape to Baltimore. And, when Charles afterwards wrote him on the subject, the letters always miscarried; at all events, were never answered. Still, he was so bland, so favorable, so complimentary to Douglass, so anxious to see him, so much interested in whatever concerned him, and, altogether, so consenting in everything but deed, that both Sarah and Charles felt no apprehension, so far as he was concerned. And, indeed, apart from the liquor question, and the enormous machinery of the Skampton influence, all things would no doubt have gone on smoothly.

CHAPTER XX.

THE SKAMPTON MILL GRINDING INFLUENCE.

"Dr. Mac, Dr. Mac, you should stretch on a rack,
To strike evil doers with terror;
To join faith and sense, upon one pretence,
Is heretic, damnable error."—BURNS.

AGES of bliss were compressed into the few short days of Charles' stay at Sarah's new home. The blooming life of early summer invited them out amid the enchantments of cultivated woodland scenery. All the pledges of fealty were renewed between them, with such additions as the unexpected, unknown danger seemed to require. They dismissed their fears, and gave themselves to recreation. Now they threaded the margin of the river; now sailed on its bosom; now angled in its waters; now bounded joyously over the glade and woodland; now took excursions to Hoboken, Staten Island, Sandy Hook, and other places of interest; now visited the curiosities of the city, and thus every amusement which leaves behind no wound to health or conscience they enjoyed with a zest rendered the more intense by their habitual devotion to the good and the useful. To her eager devotees Pleasure is a coy divinity, but to those who live for their duty she is profuse of her favors.

From New York Charles repaired directly to Mapleton, to consult his friends as to his future course. Study in some form and somewhere was now his destiny. When he reached the parental roof, the family remarked in him greater cheer-

fulness and repose of mind than ever before. The world went right with him, for once. Still, his joy was clouded by the appearance of his father, who seemed more than ever broken down in spirits. The Skampton groggery had been revived, and the dismal effects of its presence were visible on every hand. Drunkenness, indolence, riot and vice, were again the order of the day. Mr. Douglass had been repeatedly drawn in and maddened by alcohol. The effect was to make him feel that he was now a confirmed drunkard, and would never be anything else. O, the agony of this feeling, in the sober moments of such a man, no tongue can express! Shame is his watchword. It meets him at every turn. It mantles and burns in his cheek. It falls upon his ear in the hootings of young children. How can he face that society before which he has so often acted the beast? Mr. Douglass had ceased to be himself. He was a doomed man. He had fallen, not an honored, but a disgraced and abhorred victim of state legislation.

"Father," said Charles, "what do you advise, in reference to my future course?"

"Really Charles, I have no mind about it. My opinion is good for nothing, any way."

"Sorry you feel so, father. You know how much I have always relied upon your judgment."

"Things change in this world, my son," he replied, with a quivering lip and a falling tear, feeling in the depth of his soul that he was unfit for the society of such a son. He could no longer control himself, and left the room. How much is there to make one's heart bleed for the drunkard! He has lost the control of himself. Alcohol has robbed him of manhood and made him a brute, and yet the feelings of manhood will occasionally return to taunt him with his degradation.

"You see, Charles, how much your poor father suffers," said Mrs. Douglass. "I never felt so tender of him as I do now."

"I fully reciprocate your feelings, mother. The success of Skampton's suit against the town, and the reöpening of his groggery, have done all this. Legislative wisdom is legislative madness; legal justice, legal wrong, to fill the country with just such families as ours. O, mother! the pangs I have endured, God only knows. And this same Skampton is now pursuing me like a bloodhound, and I am not yet secure against his assaults. What influence he may have upon Harcourt, remains to be seen."

"I see it all, Charles; I see it all. As to your future course, your father seems so unwilling to advise, and I have so little confidence in my own judgment in the case, that I think we had better consult our good Mr. Littlefield, and also Doctor Holliston. They are men to be depended upon."

"Very well, mother; suppose you invite them to tea."

"I will, this very week. I am the more unwilling to advise you, because I am afraid I am prejudiced on the subject. Such men as Skampton have so much to do in controlling our colleges and theological seminaries, that I am quite out of conceit of them. They seem to me a forest of petrifactions to which we send our sons to gather fruit; and when gathered they are apples of Sodom, outside fair and inside ashes. I may be wrong. You must not trust me too far."

"Mother, you cannot expect me to teach without learning."

"True, you must learn; but where can you learn most effectually? Here, at home, by self-education, under a private tutor somewhere else, or in a theological seminary? That is the question."

The proposed tea-party came off, and the subject was brought up again for discussion.

"I have been denied the advantages of a public education," said Mr. Littlefield, "which makes me value it the more. I have boggled through life, for the want of it. If I had to begin again, and knew that I should be situated as I am in this community, no consideration would deter me from going through both a college and theological seminary. I would have an education, if I had to dig for it. One feels so much the need of knowledge and mental discipline, when he comes to stand from Sabbath to Sabbath before the same audience, to speak on the most important of all themes, that I am surprised that every minister of the land, especially every uneducated one, does not raise his voice on high in behalf of learning."

"I am not certain that an educated Mr. Littlefield would be worth as much to us as the uneducated one," said Mrs. Douglass. "Fervent piety and good sense are the principal requisites. Your mind is now occupied with the thoughts and images of your people; but how it would be, if it was full of classical lore, it is hard to tell. The learned, distinguished Rev. Dr. Littlefield might perhaps gratify and amuse every hundredth man among us; while the plain, uneducated *Mr.* Littlefield hits the ninety and nine, and equally benefits the others."

"I do not consider the worldly and irrelevant character which you ascribe to a learned ministry as at all necessary. It may be equally simple, equally fervent, equally acceptable to ordinary minds, and yet vastly more rich in thought, discriminating in analysis, and powerful in the application of divine truth," said Mr. Littlefield.

"I confess my ideas of Mr. Skampton have had too much

influence with me. We have suffered so much from him, and he has been such a cruel enemy to Charles, that I am afraid of those institutions over which his money gives him so much control. But, if our son must go into the mill again, why, then he must."

"Those feelings, Mrs. Douglass, you must control," said Mr. Holliston. "Skampton and all of us will soon pass off the stage, but your son may be expected to remain to do his work for another generation; and shall we send him to it unprepared? Shall we allow the present social abuses to divert him from the highest degree of intellectual and moral discipline, and leave him to do his work with an inferior grade? That would not be wise."

"But where would you send him?" said Mrs. Douglass.

"I should send him to the Riverton Seminary," said Mr. Holliston.

Charles shrugged his shoulders, and his mother exclaimed, almost with a shriek, "What! so near Mr. Skampton?"

"Skampton cannot hurt him," said Mr. Holliston. "That is the institution of our denomination; and you would not have him go out of it, of course. His prospects of success depend very much upon the educational imprimatur which he bears. If he were to go into an extra-denominational institution, it would prejudice his prospects of a place among his own people. We look to our own school of the prophets for a supply, and not to those of other denominations. Besides, your son will need to measure his talents and form connections, with those young men who are to be his associates for life."

"Very well, Mr. Holliston, I will consent to have Charles go to the Riverton Seminary, provided you will go with him,

and explore the ground, and report to us what we are to expect."

"I am a trustee of the institution," said Mr. Holliston, "and would be glad to go, as I have been so situated as not to be able as yet to act with them." Accordingly, immediate arrangements were made for Charles' departure, under the care of Mr. Holliston, to become a student in that seminary, of which we have already made mention, as included in the panoramic view from the Skampton mansion.

The eddies and gyrations of party are, in this country, the wheels within a wheel to control all the movements of society. The man who falls within the suction is dragged down to the vortex, whether he will or not. It is the Jonah's fish, to swallow up those who attempt to escape. There is really more social independence in England than with us, for this good reason, that the man who expresses an opinion not consonant with his party position is less likely to lose his place. The plebeian principles of a lord cannot deprive him of his lordship, and a post-office scullion can vote for whom he pleases without danger of losing his bread. Things are more fixed, and not so easily upset by a thought or sentiment that does not exactly tally with party lines. Here a man had as well be out of the world as out of his party. And it is generally left to the most crabbed and extreme partisan leaders, to determine the sense of the party, and what is legitimate to it. They are its great constitutional lawyers, whose opinions are fate, whose decrees destiny, to all within the party enclosure. Dulness is the social umpire, ignorance supreme dictator, and narrow-mindedness lictor and hangman. Every party has its watch-dogs to bay around its enclosure. This state of things is a restraint upon freedom. Who wishes to be barked at, even if he is not bit? A man is forced to

mind what he says. His position depends upon it. An incautious word or sentence spoken or written by him, and,

> "Fluttering his pennons vain, plumb down he drops,
> Ten thousand fathoms deep."

Skampton was becoming more and more exclusively ecclesiastical in his predilections. He had been driven to this by the result of his law-suits, following Bludgeon's battle with the devil. When the cause was brought into court, there was such an exposé made of Skampton's doings in the liquor traffic, as to defeat his attempts to obtain damages for slander. The horrible ravages of his groggeries in Mapleton and in other places were so graphically depicted by Bludgeon's lawyer, that the jury brought in a verdict of acquittal without leaving their seats. The costs were all saddled upon poor Skampton. This destroyed his last hope of putting down the temperance movement by the strong arm of the law, and led him for asylum to the church. Like that wily, hoary-headed courtier, Joab, he caught hold of the horns of the altar, and hoped to save himself and the liquor traffic by ecclesiastical proscription. Skampton had an innate as well as educational predilection for ecclesiastical matters. He had thought of studying for the ministry himself, and nothing but dulness deterred him. It was really this tendency of his character that led him to refrain so entirely from drinking, though he never acknowledged it to others, or even to himself. What may seem a little remarkable, also, was that Skampton, Bludgeon and Douglass, were all in the same ecclesiastical enclosure. Modern reform has made strange bedfellows; or, rather, has led the lion and lamb, the cow and bear, to lie down together, without losing their oppugnance of nature. Skampton, after failing in his law-suits, was directing his

mighty influence to the one point, of producing such a state of things in his church that it should sicken of characters like Bludgeon and all his crew, and vomit them forth. Such were his tendencies and his measures at the time of Mr. Hollis-ton's visit to the Riverton Seminary, in company with young Douglass. His conservatism, therefore, had become essentially dogmatical, though it had in view to reach, by another process, the practical results of business, legislation, and all those worldly matters which he so much desired to control. If an enemy is only knocked in the head, what is the difference whether it is done by legal prosecution or ecclesiastical proscription, by public assault or private scandal, by a church club or a state club? The state club had failed, and the church club must now be put in requisition.

Hence, Skampton gave more than usual attention to the Riverton Seminary. He hoped to raise up a phalanx of young men to echo his own views from Dan to Beersheba. He lavished more money than ever in purchasing influence, and yet the supply did not equal the demand. He filled the seminary with his creatures, and deposed those who would not become so. Dr. Treadmill, the principal, could not say his soul was his own. It was *not* his own, for Skampton had monopolized it. A *majority* despotism is bad enough, but not to be compared with a *one man* power. We can bear the diffused rays of the sun, but who can endure their focal heat? Even steel melts under it like wax. So, after Skampton had bought up and monopolized in himself all the rays of his party influence, the strongest men melted away at his touch. Dr. Treadmill could not stand against his influence. The seminary, of which he was the nominal head, was but a liquefied and conglomerated mass of Skamptonism. What Treadmill would have been, if he had been disintegrated,

there is no telling. We are inclined to think favorably of his individuality, had the thing been possible. But what can be said for a man who has no alternative but to lose his place, or swallow a Jonah? Treadmill not only swallowed Skampton, but a text-book of six hundred pages, which he committed *verbatim et literatim*, because Skampton thought that dead men's opinions were safer to an institution than attempting to think for ourselves. The students would now and then chuckle at poor Treadmill's expense, calling him *whale*, because he had such an immense swallow for dead men's ideas, and none for his own.

"Dr. Treadmill, what is the governing principle of your institution?" inquired Mr. Holliston, in an interview which he had with that gentleman in the seminary buildings.

"It is this, sir,—that second-hand materials are safer to orthodoxy than attempting to originate for ourselves," said Dr. Treadmill, with his eyes resting on a curtain drawn across an arched recess on one side of the room in which they were conversing.

"What! do you think it sufficient to put a bone of John Calvin into the hands of a young man to fight the battles of the living age?"

"I had rather trust him with Calvin's bone than with that of any man now on earth."

"Ay, yes; well, well, I see," said Mr. Holliston, thoughtfully; "then you think here that human nature is an immense petrifaction, and those who were long since converted to stone are more indurated and best for the living structure."

"Precisely so, Mr. Holliston. They are the primeval or granitic formation, in matters of opinion. What has come down to us in the black and white of the old creed-makers can be relied on, because it has become venerable; but there is no certainty of what we think out for ourselves."

"Just so; I see, to be sure," said Mr. Holliston, abstractedly; "then your mill grinds over the bran of past ages, in preference to the products of a present harvest."

"Yes; for this good reason, that it is a perfect security against smut," said Treadmill, still eying the curtain.

Mr. Holliston laughed outright at this, saying, "Really, this is a new idea. But there was more smut in the reasoning of past ages than there is in our own; for they had not the same aids to truth,—none except those who were divinely inspired. So, you are grinding over the bran of old smut kernels, for fear of getting into your grist some of the smut kernels of the new harvest."

Treadmill said nothing, but eyed the curtain.

"Do you confine your young men to making arguments against Rabbis and Sophists, because Paul expended so much of his thunder upon them?" said Mr. Holliston.

"O, no; we content ourselves with pointing our guns just as John Calvin did his," said Treadmill, with his eyes still fixed in the same direction.

"Why, this is like putting on the armor Don Quixote fought the windmills with, to do battle in the midst of cannon, bombs, Paixhan guns, and steam-frigates."

"Can't help it," said Treadmill; "we go for orthodoxy."

"So do I," said Mr. Holliston; "but my orthodoxy consists in pointing the artillery of truth, with all the modern helps for illustrating it, against the actual existing bulwarks of error. I deem it heterodoxy and nonsense to keep battering away upon positions which the enemy long since abandoned, merely because John Calvin found them occupied in his day, and turned against them the force of his gigantic intellect. My orthodoxy consists in meeting the questions

of the age right manfully, and, if truth will not sustain you, then die in the struggle."

"It is useless to talk here. We know what we are about," said Treadmill, still intent upon the ominous recess.

Mr. Holliston now took his leave, and joined Douglass at their hotel, heartily disgusted by what he had seen. He had no sooner gone than Skampton emerged from his lurking-place in the recess, and said, exultingly, "Bravo! bravo! Dr. Treadmill, you have acquitted yourself valiantly before that heretical dotard! You have answered the fool according to his folly. I'll fix him. He shall not hold place in our board another twelve-month. We want none who will not fay in with the rest of us. The old fellow has become very cold to me, all at once. We have been long acquainted, and yet he has not called on me since he came to town."

Mr. Holliston was so dissatisfied with Skampton's late rum doings that he did not care to continue his acquaintance, and therefore had not called on him. This was a source of great annoyance to Skampton, which he never forgave.

"It is time that old fellow had walked the plank," he said to several members of the board, the same day.

"What, Mr. Holliston?" said one. "I thought he was an unexceptionable character."

"We want none here to make disturbance," said Skampton.

"Is he troublesome in the way of thinking for himself?" said another.

"It is enough to know that he will never blend in with *us*," said Skampton.

"How will you get rid of him?" inquired a third. "His age and reputation give him a controlling influence with the public."

"That is easy enough. Write what he is,—'heretic,'—

and pin it on his back, and then see how much influence he will have. Pegan's caustics will do the work. Do you think our folks will have in this board a man *suspected* of heresy?"

"If that won't do," said another, "we 'll send our young men all abroad, to cry mad dog against him. If a man will make himself troublesome to us, he must take the consequences. Let him be cashiered, that others may fear to go against our measures."

"It is the more necessary to make our power felt just now, and to remove all from among us who will not go to the extreme against these temperance agitators, because I am now arranging to exscind them all by a single blow of discipline. We cannot and will not have among us a class of men who array themselves against all the precedents of trade, as well as of truth. Our church must drive them out with a scourge of small cords."

While Skampton delivered himself of this speech, his expression of firmness and dictatorial power would have done honor to Hildebrand or Henry VIII. Accordingly, a train of measures was set on foot against the venerable Holliston, which made his position uncomfortable; and, not caring longer to retain an official position in anything, he quietly resigned.

When Mr. Holliston met Charles at the hotel, after his interview with Treadmill, he was smiling, and repeating, in a funny way, the line of Watts:

"Hark from the tombs a doleful sound!"

"Are you from the tombs?" inquired Charles, laughing.

"Yes, direct; this is a region of death."

"What! nothing to feed life upon?"

"Nothing fit to give the dogs."

"Why so?"

"Would you feed your dogs on bones centuries old?"

"Can you not get a more recent supply?" inquired Charles, still laughing immoderately.

"No, the theology here dates back to Noah's drunkenness, where they get their liquor traffic and drinking habits."

"My mother, then, is not so far out of the way."

"No, no; her instinct is better than our reason. She saw, at a glance, the nakedness of the land. I must yield to her superior discernment."

"What is to be done?"

"That is a hard question. What you want is a thorough discipline of your spiritual affections. These in tune, Charles, theology will come forth from your soul like music from the strings of an Æolian harp touched by the winds of heaven. But for you to be put into the rack of obsolete opinions, and screwed into the form of notions that long since lost the reason which may have justified them when they sprang up, is to make of you a mere automaton. They will squeeze out of you all the juices of nature. I wonder they do not send our soldiers to acquire Achilles' mode of warfare, and our spinsters to learn of Priam's daughters how to turn the spindle. O, for *one* place where young men could be trained to apostolic simplicity of thought, purity of diction, energy of action, and aptitude to preach the truth as it is in Jesus! O, for *one* place where soul took possession of form, and living thought of dead opinions! I would recommend you to it, if it was in the sect reputed most heretical of any in the land."

"Would you recommend me to leave?"

"I hardly know what to recommend. If the institution here were not arrayed against the reforms of the age, I should think better of it; as it is, my advice is for you to

stay here under a private tutor in Hebrew and Biblical exegesis. Your Greek and Latin are already sufficient. Wait a few months, and perhaps some light may arise on this difficult subject. Perhaps you may think it best to enter the seminary in due form, if they will take you, which I much doubt, from the fear entertained of having some one among them whom they cannot hew to the length of their Procrustean bed."

Accordingly, such a tutor was found in one of the professors, who consented to do the extra work of teaching Charles for the extra pay, which his meagre salary made the more acceptable. Skampton's policy was to reduce all around him to the lowest possible allowance, that he might have the more to buy influence with. He was coming to a pinch, and expected a demand for more than all his funds, to coërce his denomination into the excision of Bludgeon and his party. He was now, therefore, specially economical.

Before leaving town, Mr. Holliston accepted an invitation to hear one of Treadmill's recitations. The professor took pains to show off to the best possible advantage, and, therefore, proposed some extra questions, among which was the following:

"Can you tell me which of the gracious affections is prior, in the order of nature?"

"No," said the young man whose turn it was to answer,—being one of those who, unfortunately, now and then thought for himself.

With evident displeasure at such an answer, Treadmill called up another, whose spirit was kindred to his own, and repeated the same question to him.

"I perceive that the point of the doctor's inquiry is this," said the young man; "whether repentance, faith, love, or

which exercise, is first in a converted person. Now, you know our Saviour has set us the example of speaking in parables. Well, then, we will suppose that all the exercises of a regenerated heart are like the buckets of a water-wheel; and, the question is, when the water is let on, which bucket starts first? My answer is, the one that the water strikes first."

To make this appear, he went into the science of hydraulics, showing that as the motion is in the water, and inseparable from the water, it must begin in the bucket which the water touches first. He added, "The tendency is to drive that bucket in a right line, which it would, undoubtedly, if it were not for the strong timbers connecting it with the other buckets. Hence, the impulse, being diffused through those timbers over the whole wheel, sets all its parts in motion, not in a right line, but curvilinearly. So, I conceive, that the motion is in the Spirit of God. That strikes the bucket of love, which is prior in the order of nature to all the other graces, tending to move it by itself and in a right line; but, being connected with all the other graces by indissoluble ties, moves the whole not directly, but circularly, producing in the soul the beauties of curvilinear motion, like the spheres."

Here, giving a flourish among the stars, the young man sat down, while Treadmill looked round with a self-satisfied air, as if to say, "You see what we can do." He felt the more gratified at the fortunate turn the question had taken, because it illustrated a theory of his, that love is dropped into a man's heart from heaven without any antecedent exercise in that heart itself, just as the moon is said to drop upon the earth the pumice of its burning mountains.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PLOT THICKENS.

"I have 't;—it is engendered! Hell and night
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light!"

SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN change is undertaken from interest, and not from principle, it often yokes itself with conservatism to keep back specific improvements. Thus Gilfort was united with Skampton in money-making and against temperance, to further his own peculiar novelties, and to gain his own personal ends. After returning and remaining with his colony in the West a year or two, we meet with him again in Skampton's library. His arrival was with the pomp and circumstance of a distinguished man of the world, in a beautiful carriage, with elegantly caparisoned horses, being now, through the sale of his lands and the contributions of his followers, well to do in the world. He took the precaution of coming under the cover of darkness, because his mission required it.

"Bless me!" said Skampton, starting up from his arm-chair as he recognized his visitor; "Mr. Gilfort, is this you?"

"Yes, me," answered Gilfort, shaking him cordially by the hand. "My friend, you look well; in fine spirits, I see. I never saw you look better in my life. I 'll be bound you are younger than when we met last."

"A good conscience, Mr. Gilfort, brings quiet and health; and health and quiet bring a youthful appearance."

"Indeed, my friend; no man ever laid a better foundation

of a good conscience than yourself. Always plodding for the public good, I see," added Gilfort, observing in his hands a roll, on which he seemed to have been laboring.

"Lay off your coat, lay off your coat, Mr. Gilfort; I am too absent-minded to be polite." Upon which Mr. Gilfort doffed his outer garment, and disclosed underneath a black suit of the finest texture, elegantly wrought with silk and velvet, and ornamented with gold in all the forms in which that metal could be conveniently worn by a man acting the part he assumed. Everything betokened one from the mines of Potosi, rather than from the dupes of his artifice in the backwoods.

"Mr. Skampton," said Gilfort, taking out a well-filled purse and throwing it carelessly on the table, "I have come, this time, prepared to show my interest in your seminary by a present for its library."

"Very opportune," said Skampton, his eyes glistening with delight; "the increase of our library is a thing upon which I am just now bestowing much attention."

"Is Charles Douglass a pupil?

"We will have nothing to do with him, sir; he is below contempt?"

"But he is in your town, is he not?"

"I hear he is, and, in fact, I have met him occasionally in the street; but do not know him, nor he me, I am happy to say."

"Well, I am distressed that he is again making that lovely girl, Sarah Harcourt, his victim. I have done my utmost to save her; but a man with whom I intrusted a matter betrayed me, — a rare thing of one whom I trust, — and their acquaintance has been renewed."

"That is the very subject I have been this day belaboring,

I have here drawn up a document to Mr. Harcourt, advising him by all means to break up the connection between his daughter and Douglass."

He read the document.

"A capital thought, a timely and benevolent warning!" said Gilfort, his snaky eyes beaming malicious delight. "But you mistake the mode of accomplishing your object. Excuse me, but I know the ground, I see, better than you do. Harcourt is under the absolute control of his daughter, and she will be sure to counteract what you have written. Better go in person; and then, let me tell you, you will not succeed till you fully assure Mr. Harcourt of the certain ruin of his family, if this connection is not broken up. The daughter, I know, you cannot persuade. I have been to New York; I know all about it."

"Is he such a fool as to consent, after what I wrote him?"

"No, he does not consent. In his heart he is more opposed to it than any of us. But his daughter's influence over him is such, and his desire of pleasing her in all things so great, that he seems to have waived all objections, keeps quiet, and leaves things to drift."

"What is to be done?" said Skampton, anxiously. "This fellow is a ringleader against us conservatives, and such a marriage will make him a formidable beast."

"I will tell you; I see it all. You must, as I say, fully establish the fact of the ruin Douglass will bring upon the family, so as to leave no doubt with Harcourt on this point. Then you may expose the infamy of Douglass to the daughter, and it is barely possible you may make some impression upon her, which I do not expect. But Harcourt will force himself into measures for her final separation from this fellow, rather than suffer the ruin of his house. He will not do it

openly, for he has not a heart to oppose her wishes; but he will do it clandestinely, if any feasible method could be proposed by a man of your standing."

"What method can I propose, Mr. Gilfort?"

"I will tell you. There live, in the beautiful valley of the Wyoming, a wealthy and accomplished gentleman and lady of the name of Marmot, whose influence will be likely to cure Miss Harcourt of her infatuation; or, at all events, they will break up all further connection between her and Douglass."

"How should that be possible, so long as the pulse of the mail beats at almost every point in the land?"

"But mails, my friend, are fingered by men; and men, for a consideration, are capable of appliances. I know of one here who will intercept the love ditties of Miss Harcourt, so that Douglass may search in vain for her whereabouts; and I'll pledge, for the Marmots, that his shall share the same fate."

"Would such a plot be *right?*" said Skampton, whose conscience felt the pinch of so bold a fraud.

Gilfort saw that he had leaked out too much of his heart, and hence exclaimed, with great apparent sincerity, "May God temper with discretion and virtue my zeal to do a good office! After all, is it a fraud? Is it an unworthy step, in a father, to intercept the flow of poison to the mind of a child? I am merely suggesting a plan on which Mr. Harcourt himself may act. You and I have no responsibility in the matter. We can assure him that, in the family of the Marmots, Sarah will have all and more than her station in life requires; will be surrounded by friends refined and affectionate, a country beautifully romantic, and, above all, that her situation will utterly preclude the possibility of further communication between her and Douglass."

"But suppose he insists upon knowing *how* this is to be brought about,— what then?"

"Why, in that case, you can assure him of the consummate address of the Marmots, of their experience in such matters; and that they will be sure to do it entirely to his satisfaction, provided he should request it."

"Let me see," said Skampton, thoughtfully; "is it doing as I would be done by? If Sarah were my daughter,— hum — mum. But I was about to say, if Sarah were my daughter, and I saw her in the jaws of certain ruin, would it not be right for me, in virtue of my parental authority, to take measures, secretly and against her will, to save her? Would she not thank me for it, in after years? Yes, yes, no doubt. Then am I not doing as I would be done by, in advising Harcourt to the same course?" By the time Skampton had gone over these thoughts in his mind, he was resolved; and, leaping up of a sudden, he exclaimed, "Yes, my excellent Gilfort, I see you are right. If your plan promises to succeed, there can be no objection on the score of conscience. But will it succeed?"

"My friend," said Gilfort, earnestly, feeling that his point was gained, "you can assure Harcourt, as a gentleman and a Christian, that no more communications will pass between his daughter and Douglass, after she is introduced into the Marmot family, provided he shall give orders to that effect. You know deceit is no part of my character; and I should not tell you this, did not my acquaintance with the skill and address of that family give me perfect confidence of its truth."

"But how will Mr. Harcourt induce his daughter to visit Wyoming? Perhaps she may refuse."

"That we will leave to him. Assured by *you* of her ruin,

unless the step is taken, he will find means of bringing it about. Nothing could be more likely to captivate such a mind as hers than the idea of spending time in the beautiful and poetical valley of the Wyoming." Gilfort spoke advisedly, for he knew that this had been an old desire of Miss Harcourt.

"Very well; we will leave details to Harcourt himself. I like your suggestion, in the main, and will promptly and conscientiously perform my part."

"I have no motive but humanity and friendship for the Harcourts," said Gilfort, graciously. "I do not hesitate to say that, by this act, Mr. Skampton, you will add another to your many deeds of philanthropy, and provide a sweet solace for the pains of your dying day."

"Ah, my friend, my life is spent in the self-denying labor of doing good," said Skampton, with a look which would have done credit to any saint in the calendar. Poor man! how little did he realize the snare in which he was taken to his own ruin!

"But your reward is on high, my excellent Mr. Skampton; and it will be a great and shining one, as suited to your many virtues."

The result of this interview was, that Mr. Skampton started, post-haste, for New York, to execute the plan. He was ignorant of the darker shades of Gilfort's character, and had no just appreciation of the plot to which he was lending himself. He was incapable of so dark a deed. His ultra conservatism, united to a desire of influence and control which by this time had grown to be a monomania, was his ruin. He was determined to force the liquor traffic, slavery, and every antiquated notion, down the necks of posterity; and, in order to do it, he desired to finger and control everything. Do-

mestic matters, marriage contracts, everything would go wrong, without his pious watch-care. Some apology must be made for him, because he was so frequently consulted on these points,—a circumstance which gradually wrought in him the feeling that he had a right to dictate, whether asked or not. Experience taught him that the interests in reference to which he made such enormous purchases of influence could not be managed without looking after the private matters of individuals and families. Against Charles Douglass he had a bitter dislike ever after his personal altercation with him; and this feeling had been further inflamed by the efforts which had been made, both before the courts of justice and the public at large, to implicate him in the drunkenness of Charles' father. This seemed to him a most preposterous idea, that, because he owns the house in which a man gets drunk, therefore he is guilty of making him drunk. He would gnash his teeth, when the subject was mentioned; and, because Charles had often charged him with instigating the crime of his father, there was nothing too bad for him to do and say against that young man. Besides, Skampton was at this very time preparing to prosecute Bludgeon and his party in the ecclesiastical tribunals; and it was material to his success that the voice of Mapleton should be silenced. Mr. Holliston he had already forced off the track; and he knew Charles Douglass would be as good as dead, if cut off forever from the Harcourts. Such was the man now bent upon the ruin of this already afflicted and persecuted young aspirant to the clerical calling.

Mr. Skampton was announced to Mr. Harcourt and his daughter, who hastened to receive him in a manner worthy of his distinguished position. It happened that De Lisle had called, and was engaged in familiar conversation with Sarah

at the time of his arrival; and Skampton, observing the noble person and gentlemanly manners of the young man, felt a secret hope that a more engaging suitor had already accomplished the work on which he came; and, retiring to an adjoining room, he said to Mr. Harcourt, "I see the urchin who had the battle with the deer is likely to get the slip."

"The slip? No; I wish in my heart he might! But no one else has any influence with my deluded child," said the father of Sarah, with bitter chagrin, that her heart should not be open to such a man as De Lisle, of whose delicate intentions he had no doubt.

"Well, what is to be done, in that case?" said Skampton.

"Done?—nothing! Fate, you know, governs; we must yield to fate."

"What! without an effort to avoid the evil?"

"Perhaps, after all, Douglass may make my daughter happy. *Her* thinking so will do much towards it, will it not?"

"No, Mr. Harcourt," replied Skampton, impressively. "I tell you, on the honor of a gentleman and Christian, that he will be her ruin. You must suppose I have the means of knowing; and that, being a young man to whom I extended charity at one time, I should naturally desire his advancement."

"Was he dependent on *charity?*" replied Harcourt, with a sneer.

"Yes, on my bounty; and I found him the most impudent, impertinent, hair-brained fellow I ever had to do with. Our college at Diddington was forced to pass upon him an act of expulsion. Besides, his father is one of the most furious drunkards in the country, and will no doubt end his

days on the gallows. He is always full of murder as soon as he has liquor in his head; and, like father like son,—that you may depend upon, in this case. They are as much alike as two peas."

"Is it possible? What is to be done?" exclaimed Harcourt, with blank astonishment.

"I will frankly state to her these facts, and she will break the connection at once. She is too good, too noble, to unite her destiny with such a base fellow, and such a worthless family."

"O that it might be so! But I fear not. You do not know my daughter. She never gives up a friend."

"Not when he becomes an enemy?"

"The thing is to make her believe that. You can try, and I will do my utmost to help you. This ill-judged engagement has poisoned all my happiness, since I came to the city. It is too aggravating to see her tied down to that little country rustic, even if he were right in other respects, when wealth, talent and noble blood, are at her feet."

As soon as Sarah was disengaged, she came tripping lightly into the room, to show due respect to their distinguished visitor. "How do you do, Mr. Skampton? It is a long time since I had the pleasure of seeing you,—when I was a little girl, I think."

"Yes, in Mapleton," said Skampton.

"By the way, have you seen Charles Douglass, of late? He is in your town, I think. You remember he was confined at our house by an injury, when you was with us last."

"I remember well, though, in truth, Miss Harcourt, his character is such at present that I should be ashamed to confess I know him."

"What do you mean, sir?" said Sarah, with an expression of wounded feeling.

"Mean? I mean you have betrothed yourself to a man as unworthy of you as Satan is for a seat in Paradise."

"Sir," said Sarah, calmly, but firmly, "I know Charles Douglass,—I have known him from his childhood; and the testimony of a thousand prejudiced witnesses would not shake my confidence in him."

"My daughter," said Mr. Harcourt with great emotion, yet tenderly, "do not treat our worthy guest with disrespect."

"I mean it not so, dear father," said Sarah; "I know the circumstances have been such as to give Mr. Skampton a prejudiced view of Mr. Douglass' character. I will vindicate the rights of an injured friend. I will let the injurer know that he can find no favor with me. It is useless to talk in this strain. I have all the means of knowing Mr. Douglass' character which I desire."

"My daughter, my daughter!" cried Harcourt, in great agony of mind, "consider seriously whether Mr. Skampton has not had better opportunities of judging than you have. Do hear his testimony! Young men change. Whatever Mr. Douglass was in time past, he may since have become unworthy of your confidence. Who has better means of knowing a young man than his benefactor, feeling, as he may be supposed to, a father's interest in him? You are too hasty; you will not allow Mr. Skampton to state facts."

"Very well, sir; what facts have you to state?" said Sarah.

"Facts,—do you ask me for facts?" said Skampton, with nervous excitement at the promptitude with which Miss Harcourt met him.

"Yes, please give us *one* to justify your views of Mr. Douglass," said Sarah, mildly.

"His father is a drunkard, and likely to be a murderer too."

"Who made him so? Who held the cup to his lips, in spite of the tears and entreaties of a wife?" said Sarah, firmly.

"You are personal, Miss. Do you mean to insult me?" said Skampton, now more agitated than ever.

"Not at all," replied Sarah; "I am after the facts. I have the means of knowing that Mr. Douglass, senior, was well born and educated, and withal of a noble nature; but that he became a victim of the drinking customs of society, and was ruined. But he reformed, and would now be virtuous and happy as any of us, but for the temptations with which interested men have surrounded him."

"Does anybody compel him to drink?" said Skampton, with ill-suppressed anger.

"No, they only take advantage of a weakness induced by indulgence in drinking, for the sake of a little paltry gain. But, then, what has Charles done? Is he to be blamed for his father's misdeeds?"

"No, he has enough of his own, in all conscience. Ask Diddington College, from which he was expelled for his bad conduct."

"I have a letter from the president which tells a very different story." Sarah now produced and read from it the following: "Mr. Douglass was expelled for no fault of his own. He was our best and most orderly student. He was sacrificed to a question of life or death to the college."

"The scoundrel! the scoundrel!" said Skampton, rising and pacing the floor in an agitated manner. "I 'll make

him smart for that! The truth is, Miss, Douglass was on my charity, and yet insulted me to my face. He richly deserved expulsion, and that the faculty will say, in spite of their lying president."

"He never knowingly accepted your bounty, sir; and restored it, every cent, with interest, as soon as he learned the fact. I honor him for his spirit on the occasion."

"Honor him! honor him!" said Skampton, sneeringly; "I think he 'll need it when he is deprived of the priesthood. Our denomination will depose him for heresy, as soon as they have time to act."

"This is another charge; — pray, on what ground?"

"Our seminary would not receive him, if he offered, they deem him so unworthy of the calling to which he aspires."

"He has not offered, I am thankful to say," added Miss Harcourt. "Theology cannot be measured off by rules and definitions. It shineth in the sun; it beameth in the stars; it bloometh in the earth; it speaketh in the Bible; it beateth in the hearts of the good, the least of whom has, in himself, the basis of an independent judgment. 'He needeth not that any should teach him.' If Mr. Douglass is what I believe him to be, I would give more for the theology he already has than all you can teach him."

Skampton, bethinking that she was a lady, restrained his burning indignation, saying to Harcourt, in an under tone, "Enough."

"Enough, till you state something more conclusive than this," added Miss Harcourt.

CHAPTER XXII.

DUBIOUS PRESENTIMENTS.

"Methinks I hear, methinks I see
Ghosts, goblins, fiends; — my fantasie
Presents a thousand ugly shapes;
Headless bears, black men and apes,
Doleful outcries and fearful sights
My sad and dismal soul affrights."— BURTON.

No further interviews took place between Sarah and Mr. Skampton, except of the most formal and commonplace kind. But he remained housed with her father several days, divulging and maturing the plan of Gilfort,— the name of that gentleman, however, being never mentioned between them. This was probably owing to a desire, on the part of Skampton, to monopolize the credit of it to himself. Every particular in reference to the Marmots, their precise location, character, circumstances, and fitness for the trust to be committed to them, were discussed, all of which were made to appear in the most favorable light, and were carefully treasured up by Mr. Harcourt. Sarah, meantime, had a presentiment that mischief was brewing, though she had not the remotest suspicion of the real facts in the case. The following letter bears date near the time of Skampton's visit.

"MY DEAR CHARLES: I have a mysterious feeling, which I cannot get rid of, that something is arising to interrupt the freedom of our intercourse. I am not superstitious, nor do I judge wholly without facts. Those facts I can state only

in person. I do not like to interfere with your studies; and yet, if you need relaxation for a week or two, I hope you will turn your footsteps this way. Happiness is too dear a possession to be left unguarded, or carelessly thrown away. Let us, therefore, look out for birds of passage. All you ever was to me you are; and all I ever was to you I am. Is not this so? Why do I ask? Am I not in the hands of my mother's God? My serenity is undisturbed, though occasional clouds intercept the bright beams of my hope. But clouds diversify our mental as well as our physical condition, and teach us the value of sunshine. These broken lines will convey to you more than to another, my heart, my soul, my best and most devoted interest in your happiness.

"SARAH."

This letter was dictated by a fear that he who was capable of slandering Douglass to her would be equally capable of slandering her to him. Sarah deemed no explanations safe, in a case like this, but those which should be made by word of mouth. Charles replied, immediately, that an extraordinary event had just then occurred to detain him a day or two. Immediately upon his arrival in Riverton, curiosity to see the man whom Gilfort had so singularly defrauded led him to make the acquaintance of Roderick Dobson. He hoped, also, to do somewhat towards reforming the miserable man, who, he learned, was now more deeply sunk in intemperance than ever. Nor were his efforts without the promise of success. Dobson relinquished his cups for a time, and resumed his business. But the loss of his money preyed upon him so much, when he was sober, that he plunged again into dissipation, to drown his trouble. This tendency was further strengthened by the effects of the wound he received on

the night of Bludgeon's battle. His nature seemed physically, mentally, and morally, broken down, and nothing but bodily coërcion could keep him from drinking. He retained property enough still to supply rum for his burning thirst; and all, beyond a meagre support for himself and wife, went that way. His wife, so far from checking him, had, from sympathy or sorrow, fallen into the same habits. The alcoholic demon reigned absolute within their doors. It was a very pandemonium for all the possible devils of conjugal hatred, abuse, contention, fighting, and wretchedness.

About a week before the receipt of Sarah's letter, Dobson had laid in a barrel of whiskey, after which both of them lay drunk night and day; and on the very morning of the day on which he received the letter, he called at Dobson's, and learned the state of affairs. Douglass found them both dead drunk, and shockingly bruised and blackened by the blows which they had inflicted upon each other. He watched over them until they became sober, furnished them with a good fire and an ample supply of ready-cooked food, and then procured a little girl, at one of the neighbors', to look after them, and do any little errands they might find occasion for. They were too much debilitated to be left alone. He then locked the door of the closet in which they kept their whiskey-barrel, and took the key with him, to make sure that they drank nothing till he should see them again. On his way home, in the evening, he took Miss Harcourt's letter from the post-office.

The next morning, early, he repaired again to Dobson's, anxious to see them out of their critical condition before going to New York. As he approached the house, a horrible odor assailed him, such as he had never before encountered. He looked round the house, to detect the cause, but could see

nothing but a subtle fume exuding from the chimney and crevices. What can this mean? He knocks at the door, but gets no answer. He knocks again and again, but with the same result. He tries to open, but finds it confined by a strong lock. Why is this? Where are they? The odor is horrible! He goes to the neighbors, and inquires for the little girl, and learns from her that Dobson broke open the closet-door with a sledge, soon after he left, and brought out a little four-quart pail full of the whiskey, and began to drink. He then ordered away the little girl, and locked the door behind her.

Douglass returned and forced the door; when, lo! out rushed a volley of fetid air, that well-nigh suffocated him. He stepped back a few paces, until the room was somewhat ventilated through the open door, when he returned, and, horrible to tell! there lay the charred and blackened remains of Dobson, manifestly dead by spontaneous combustion! The room, and all its furniture, were covered with a thick yellow substance, filthy and fetid, to shock every delicate sensibility. In another part of the room his wife also lay dead, as it appeared partly from suffocation from the exhaling fume of her burning husband, and partly from her own excessive drunkenness. The contents of the pail were all gone. Dobson probably drank more than his share of the liquor; and, as his constitution was already rendered combustible by previous drinking, this deep potation set it on fire; and it went off in blue flame and exhaling fluid, extinguishing both his own life and that of his besotted companion.

After waiting long enough to bury all of this miserable couple that remained for interment, Charles started, post-haste, for New York. The few days he spent with Sarah were happy above thought or expression. Ages of pure

delight seemed compressed into a moment. They expatiated on the events which had occurred since they last met; on the memory of Mapleton, Terracegreen and Forestdale; Canaudeh, the arbor, their hopes, aspirations, and the high privilege of living to do good, even in the humblest sphere. On the subject of her presentiments, Sarah frankly told all,—Skampton's visit, her interview with him, what he said and her replies, how her father had since appeared; and yet, her remarks were so pointed with love that Douglass had a better opinion of all the parties concerned than he had before.

"Dear Sarah, my heart assures me that I have no bitterness for Mr. Skampton, though I have suffered more from him than any one else. I pity the guilty more now than ever," said Douglass, alluding to the horrible death in which Dobson's sin had ended, of which he had given Miss Harcourt a minute account.

"I know you have suffered much from Mr. Skampton, Charles; but I had a hundred-fold rather be in your place than his. I pity the poor man's delusion."

"Well you may. I have watched him for years, and do not believe there is a more indefatigable man living. He really feels that the care of all the world is upon him; that, but for him, the land would be maddened by reform and ultraism; that governments would run wild, the church become corrupt to its core, and everything go to decay. He is the pivot, in his own estimation, on which the destinies of society turn."

"Is it possible? I am afraid of such a man. Who is secure against his interference? I never understood him."

"Well, it is so, my dear Sarah; though I think these feelings have increased upon him since the failure of his lawsuits against Bludgeon. He is now struggling to supply by

influence his lack of the physical coërcion of the law. I am told by a student who is familiar with him that he does not sleep nights. He is running to and fro, advising this and advising that, dipping into this man's affairs, exposing this and that one's imaginary error and wickedness, circumventing this, that and the other, supposed enemy of his conservative policy; and, in the midst of it all, he has no repose. This student says he lives continually on the borders of a brain fever, and, on one occasion, was actually attacked, when the young man was called to watch with him, and he passed the whole night in the paroxysms of insanity, fisting the wall, under the notion of killing temperance men, heretics and devils. His very complexion is blue with restless care, and his face is elongated beyond its usual dimensions. Did you ever see a brow so heavy and deeply shaded? He moves among us like night. Never did a man suffer more fictitious or more real sorrows,— fictitious as to their reason, but real in their influence upon himself."

"Charles, you surprise me. Is it true that this odious intermeddling in private affairs is common?"

"Yes, common as the flakes of winter. He is a perfect terrier, pursuing his prey through every subterraneous winding, and never giving it up. I expect always to have him on my track, till relieved by death, or the destruction of his influence. He can never forgive, not the wrongs our family have done him, but those that he has done us. If it were the other way, there would be hope; but, so long as his conscience needs the relief of making us the criminal party, he will continue the untraced war."

"Who is safe, with such a man to deal with?"

"Echo says, 'Who?' How many have been ruined by his dogged pertinacity! And yet, he is not so bad a man as

you and I would be likely to represent. He is one of those constitutional conservatists who regard all change in opinion or usage as a personal injury done to themselves, and all reformers enemies to their own peace and the happiness of mankind. They are the watch-dogs to bark at innovation and innovators. And, besides, Skampton places an over-estimate on his own influence and responsibility. His pride of station is prodigious. He is not aware of it himself, for it enters into his very blood and being. He is conscientiously meddlesome, and religiously officious."

"What can have deluded him into this high opinion of himself? His talents are moderate."

"Money, money, and the flattery money brings, have bewitched him. He has not the generosity to give without the hope of a return, but always sends in his bill for special consideration, personal control over those who receive the gift, or some subtle remuneration of the kind, which he deems an ample offset for his money. By the payment of my tuition bills for a few years, he had acquired the power, in his own estimation, to forbid my temperance efforts. His object was, to buy me up as one of his runners. He has hundreds and thousands whom he has thus bought up. He has *given*, as he calls it, several hundred thousand dollars in making these purchases. Of course, it has swelled his little personal self unto kingly power. He is an enormous social fungus, fed by the acrid humors of a diseased and feculent public sentiment. He is consulted on all subjects. This further swells his personal consequence, and increases the evils which he endures and inflicts."

"After all, my dear Charles, there is an overruling Providence who protects the innocent. We are safe in his hands.

Let us not requite with evil Mr. Skampton's efforts for the public good."

"That is well said; *for the public good.* If the truth were known, his visit here would be found the result of prayers and tears. He is devout in his way. He felt himself called on to deprive me of the power to do evil. But, as you say, God will be the judge between him and me. I leave my cause in his hands, and trust he will bring forth my righteousness as the light."

"There is no danger, Charles, of leaving it there."

"My heart tells me it is true. And I know yours is. I do not doubt, I cannot fear, that our union is a provision of divine wisdom, and will be brought to pass by parental love."

"Think not, Charles, I have any misgiving on that point. No, no; had our plighted vows never before been exchanged, my heart's purest feelings would dictate them now."

"Sarah, dear, as you say, let us look out for birds of passage. If you receive fifty letters in my hand-writing, containing things inconsistent with these vows, you may know, before Heaven, that they are vile forgeries. My heart, my hand, sweet girl, could never, never move in such a strain."

"Should you, Charles, fail to hear from me, or should you learn things of me to give you pain, then know that all is false, and that I have your interest at heart more, if possible, than my own. Affection gushes up from the hallowed fountains of my soul, to assure me we are one."

"O, Sarah! how can I leave you, being of my being? For my sake, do not too rudely expose yourself to the evening dews, in your walks. I have suffered, O, how much! lest a cold should early deprive me of you, by consigning you too soon to your mother's hectic death. That would be my

death; my life would lose its earthly moorings, and I should pray to be gone."

"I will take care of myself. I would live for your sake. I would comfort my poor father; though, I confess, to join my sainted mother sometimes appears to me far better."

"Halloo, there, sir! are you the man who has ordered my coach?" cried a voice before the house to Douglass, about taking his leave of Sarah, in the hall; "come on, come on! we are off; the cars will leave you."

"One kiss, in spite of this savage coachman," said Charles, when he mounted the coach, with the sweet voice of her he loved so much pronouncing in his ear, "Faith, faith, faith is our victory." Tears flowed copiously on both sides, and a sombre feeling settled down upon their spirits, as though they might meet no more on earth. Charles returned to his studies, and Sarah to the even tenor of her charities and her duties; with this understanding, however,—that, on the ensuing September, they were to meet again, and unite their destinies for life.

Mr. Harcourt seemed moody and unhappy. His daughter was his life. He saw and appreciated her worth. But he now fully believed, from the representations of Mr. Skampton, that she was on the borders of ruin. He had, till now, hoped against hope; but black despair had succeeded to its place, and he felt compelled to adopt measures wholly inconsistent with his usual frank manner of treating her. Such measures, so far as he had already adopted them, seemed to create the necessity for more, as one lie requires a dozen to cover it. His heart revolted at the idea; it was more than he could quietly endure. The duplicity of his flight from the plantation was torture to him; and how could he survive something far worse? He was inclined to give up to the

plot, and let things take their course; but then he would say to himself, "Mr. Skampton knows; my judgment is good for nothing. I have dwelt upon the subject till I am addled and confounded. If I fail of breaking up this unfortunate connection, still, when her ruin comes, it will be a consolation to have tried. Persuasion is lost upon her. Stratagem, stratagem is my only hope."

Parents who entertain doubts as to the delicate attachment of a daughter whom they tenderly love are the only ones to appreciate the feelings of the anxious and suffering Harcourt. His bosom was the home of torturing sensations. To relieve himself, he drank deeper than ever, accompanying his daily bottle of wine with certain trimmings and additions, such as a mint-julep before dinner, hot punch on retiring to bed, or a cocktail at any hour when the fancy took him. These supernumeraries were not only necessary as a solace for trouble, but to meet the increasing demands of the alcoholic worm within. Still, Harcourt never went beyond the bounds of genteel drinking. No man was so intolerant as he of the out-and-out drunkard. He thought even a prison or a sty too good for such a wretch.

Harcourt did not acknowledge it to himself, but it was nevertheless true, that the secret hope of having De Lisle for a son-in-law had its influence with him. The fact of that gentleman's great wealth and high birth excited his vanity and inflamed his imagination. Scarce a day passed without a visit from De Lisle,— not, as Harcourt supposed, on an errand of love, but of religion. He could not appreciate such a motive, but attributed it to the overpowering attractions of his daughter, to which no one was more sensible than himself. Hence, he entered at once into a correspondence with the Marmots, and found things answer to his expecta-

tions. He, therefore, arranged for the contemplated visit, though he was still in doubt as to the most feasible mode of breaking the subject to Sarah. Thus things went on till May, when he contrived to take her in the snare in a way to elude suspicion, and, alas! to involve himself in hopeless woe. He had his request, but leanness came into his soul. To shun one evil, he encountered nothing but evil.

CHAPTER XXIII.

EXCURSION TO THE VALLEY OF THE WYOMING.

"So sweet a spot of earth, you might, I ween,
Have guessed some congregation of the elves,
To sport by summer beams, had shaped it for themselves."

CAMPBELL.

RISING one morning after a feverish night, the father of Sarah hastened to her room, and embraced her as usual, only with greater tenderness, calling her by every epithet of endearment that a father's fondness could suggest,— my love, my darling,— exclaiming, "My adored daughter, what could I do without you?"

"Dear father, what could I do without you?" replied Sarah, kissing him tenderly.

"This is a sweet morning, Sarah. How soft the breezes! how balmy the air! how beautiful the flowers! how joyous the opening leaves! how bland the aspect of nature! how sweetly your Tiny sings! And what do you think I have been dreaming of, through the night?"

"What, dear father? I cannot imagine."

"To escape from our prison to the freedom of life in the country. I long for God's groves, and not man's; for his flower-crowned valleys and hills, in place of our parterres; for herds of kine and flocks of sheep; for the vernal song of birds in their native forests, and the joyousness of a rural landscape. I must away to the country; and will you, Sarah, go with me?"

"To the plantation?"

"No, to the sweet valley of the Wyoming. You know how often you have desired to visit that region of poetry and romance."

Sarah, running over in her mind the months to September, when she and Charles were to unite their destiny, began, unconsciously, to count, "One, two, three, four. Yes, father, I will spend the summer with you in the country. When will you go?"

"To-morrow."

"No, father, not to-morrow, —that is too soon,— but the next day. The next day I will be ready. I must visit the shops, and make purchases first."

"Very well,— the next day."

The appointed day came; and Harcourt, to make the journey agreeable, performed it in his own carriage, by easy stages, that they might enjoy at their leisure the country scenery. Anticipating his speedy separation from Sarah, and the painful ordeal through which she had to pass, his heart yearned over her with all the fondness of a father's love. He would often clasp her in his arms, and fondle her as if she were but six years old. Sarah had no suspicion of what was working in his mind, such outbursts of tenderness being no uncommon thing with him. On the day which terminated their journey, the morning was unusually fine. They took

an early stage to enjoy a sunrise among the mountains, to sharpen their appetite for breakfast, to inhale the pure exhalations of the teeming earth, and to reach a certain humble inn, called the log tavern, situated in a deep ravine by a leaping brook, which had the reputation of breakfasting its guests on the most delicious trout. It was as romantic as humble. Their ride was among hills and valleys, and a delightful combination of scenery.

"O, father, what a beautiful world!" exclaimed Sarah. "What a charming landscape! how checkered with hills and valleys, meadows and ploughed fields, bounding flocks and singing birds! One might almost mistake it for Eden. How sweet the odor! how fragrant the breezes! One cannot inhale enough of such air," she added, inflating her lungs with the ambrosial zephyrs that played around them.

"It is beautiful, daughter, beautiful,—O, how beautiful! Look yonder," pointing in the distance; "see that farm-yard filled with kine! How eager their frisking young for the morning repast! O, how superior nature's own condiments to those of our preposterous cookery!"

"And how superior the drink of the mountain-brook, leaping and sparkling as it flows, to the fermented or distilled poison which so many imbibe to their ruin!" added Sarah, casting a tender and respectful look at her father.

The tears came to his eyes, and he said, sincerely, no doubt, "Sarah, you think me an incorrigible wine-drinker, and I think so, too. I would give all we are worth, and be as poor as yonder milk-maid, had I never tasted a drop. I never had a heart to confess this before; but I have felt it,—felt it, O how much! I cannot give it up now. It is too late. I have not the firmness to resist a habit which has become second nature. I am perfectly wretched without my daily

wine. But, if I had a thousand tongues, and each tongue were as eloquent as Demosthenes or Cicero, I could not with them all express the sense I feel within"— laying his hand on his heart—"of the importance to young men of never tasting a drop."

"How, then, could you say so much, dearest father, against the temperance pledge?"

"Because I hate cant,— I abhor fanaticism, of which it seems to me the offshoot. I am speaking of avoiding wine from the beginning, as an impulse of nature, and not of religious excitement. Much as I abhor drinking, I had rather die a drunkard than be a fanatic."

"Dear father, you certainly err in this."

"Can't help it,— must obey my destiny. And yet, had it been my destiny to be one of those plough-boys who never taste strong drink, it would be better than as I am. Would you not like to be one of those milk-maids who follow the calves to gather the gleanings?"

"Alas, father, they are insensible to the means of happiness within their reach! Perhaps they have some evil habit which they have not the firmness to correct."

"It is true, Sarah; all men are of the same stuff. Evil gains residence in us easier than it is ejected. The most common means of happiness are least understood and least enjoyed. Familiar objects pall upon the mind, and produce indifference. The shepherd, who contemplates daily the towering magnificence of Mont Blanc, heeds not a sight which we go thousands of miles to behold. Our transient glance at this beautiful scene affords us a pleasure which these milk-maids cannot feel. Who knows how much the blindness of Homer and Milton may have enlivened their descriptions of light, color, and visible scenery? These objects, no longer able to

satiate and fatigue the eye, lived in their minds as a sweet vision of the past, in bright contrast to their present darkness, to heighten and inflame the sense of their beauty. Who but a blind man could write Milton's description of Satan's journey through Chaos and Ancient Night, towards the nearest coast to light? Or who but a blind man could have conceived of morning as rosy veiled, rising from the beds of Tithonurs, and spreading over all the earth? Passages like these indicate a mind in which the impressions of nature had acquired the charm of a delicious recollection."

"Did not Milton borrow from Homer? How else should the coincidence arise of his morn advancing with rosy steps in the eastern clime, and sowing the earth with orient pearl?"

"It is true, the scintillations of all genius and learning blend their effulgence in Milton's muse; and yet he is as artless as nature, and as simple as a child. Herein is the triumph of his genius. That, in his circumstances, he should have been as poetical as Homer, proves the greater poet."

"Yet, the Scriptures say things even more sublime with less apparent effort. 'Let there be light, and there was light.'—'Morning spread upon the mountains.'—'Riding on the wings of the wind.'"

Thus beguiling the hours, they at length reached the place of their destination. Mr. Harcourt had informed his daughter that they should not put up at a public house, but seek the more quiet retreat of a private family, with whom he had arranged by letter for their reception.

"Here we are at last," said he, as they drove up to the door of the Marmots.

"What an Elysian! — a perfect Paradise!" exclaimed Sarah.

"Indeed it is," rejoined her father. "It exceeds all my expectations."

In a moment more, the door of the coach was thrown open by a liveried servant, who ushered them into the great hall of the house, where they were met by Mr. and Mrs. Marmot in full dress, who appeared to be persons of fashion and extreme elegance of manners.

"You have been long delayed. We have been for two or three days awaiting your arrival," said Mr. Marmot.

"You must remember we are not on a tour of haste and business, but of health and recreation," replied Mr. Harcourt. "We have been detained by the fairies among your mountains."

"Enchanting beings they are," said their host; "they exceed fair Tempe,

> 'Whose lawns, whose glades, ere human footsteps yet
> Had traced an entrance, were the hallowed haunts
> Of sylvan powers immortal; where they sate
> Oft in the golden age, the Nymphs and Fauns
> Beneath some arbor branching o'er the flood,
> And leaning round, hung on the instructive lips
> Of hoary Pan, or o'er some open dale
> Danced, in light measure, to his seven-fold pipe,
> While Zephyr's wanton hand along their path
> Flung flowers of painted blossoms, fertile dews,
> And one perpetual spring!'"

"Glorious! enchanting!" exclaimed Mr. Harcourt, entranced by the quotation, and still more by the taste and feeling with which it was spoken, and the signs of literary talent in the man to whom he was about to commit so important a trust. He began now to believe all Skampton said of the magic of this family. Sarah herself felt, in all she saw and heard, the charm of beauty, love, and poetry. Indeed, the

house and its elaborately cultivated grounds were peculiarly suited to nourish the enchanting illusion. It had been erected by an English gentleman of great wealth, who, attracted to the spot by Campbell's "Gertrude," had selected it for his home; but, finding the realities of republican life a sorry reflection of his distant dreams, he had abandoned it. The most of his servants, attached to the country as better suited to their humbler condition, had remained, and were brought together in their former livery, to act as the unconscious satellites and abettors of this nefarious plot. The house was a perfect nondescript, a truly poetical conception, in which all the orders of architecture were blended into one unique and harmonious result. Beautiful, grand, imposing, picturesque, both the structure itself and all its furniture and appendages were formed to call up each some grateful emotion of sense and imagination,— as a whole, producing in the mind of the beholder a mysterious feeling of harmony and splendor.

The father and daughter were delighted with the family, of which, besides the servants, Mr. and Mrs. Marmot seemed to be the sole members. Everything had the air of ease and freedom which belongs to persons of retired fortune, who have nothing in hand but to make the most of life and its enjoyments. All vied with each other to increase the happiness of their guests. A choice selection of books, in the room of both Sarah and her father, with elegant gilt bindings, and ingeniously suited to the taste of each, had been carefully provided and arranged. This further proof of the elevation of the family made Harcourt insensible, for the moment, to the secret worm which had gnawed at his heart, from the first day of Skampton's visit, leading him to exclaim, "Skampton is right,— he is right! Here, if anywhere, my sweet Sarah will forget her unfortunate attachment."

Poor man! — how little did he suspect the mischief which lurked under these fair appearances! How little did he mistrust that the hand of Gilfort was in all this! How little did he anticipate that these were his last conscious hours with one in whom his existence was so bound up! How fearful the contiguity of bliss and woe in the experience of mankind!

A careful observer might have detected something furtive and strange in the glances of Mr. and Mrs. Marmot. These did not wholly escape Sarah's notice; though, from her father's assurances that he had been well advised of the great excellence of the family, she suppressed every rising suspicion. Her father's forgetfulness of his sorrows was but momentary. In spite of himself, beneath the air of gayety which he assumed lay concealed the most agonized feelings, that he should be compelled to this clandestine treatment of Sarah, whose soul was in her words, whose heart responded to every sentiment she uttered. He took the earliest opportunity to communicate freely with Mr. and Mrs. Marmot on the subject.

"I wish you to understand that my daughter is everything to me," he said to them. "In intrusting her to you, I put my reason, my wealth, my life, my all, in your hands."

"We fully appreciate your feelings," said Mr. Marmot.

"None can enter into them as we do," added his wife, wiping a falling tear, "since it is but a year since we buried our only daughter; a charming creature she was, too."

"Yes, my dear wife, and do you not think our lovely Blandina was strikingly like Miss Harcourt?" said her husband.

"Indeed, husband, the very image of her," she replied, sobbing aloud. "I have hardly been able to restrain my feelings since Miss Harcourt's arrival, partly of grief at our

loss, and partly of gratitude that another Blandina is sent in her place. O, I shall love her with more than a mother's fondness!"

"I am happy to find hearts so fitted to give my sweet Sarah place," said Harcourt, mingling his tears with theirs.

"Your letters inform us that your daughter has formed an unhappy attachment," said Mr. Marmot.

"Yes, and nothing but the hope of breaking it up could have compelled me to this step. Do you still feel confident of being able to intercept further communications with her deceiver?"

"The most perfect, sir, and of making her most happy in the arrangement," they both replied.

"In the latter, I fear, you will be mistaken. My daughter will no doubt be uneasy at the delay of letters. I fear she will instantly resolve on following me; and I have this to say, that if every other means of pacifying her fail, you must let her have her letters. Remember this charge. If she must perish, let it be by her own hands, not mine."

"There is no doubt, Mr. Harcourt, that we shall be able to keep her satisfied. If we fail, we will be true to your charge," said both the husband and wife.

Having settled everything, Harcourt felt that he must leave before a letter from Douglass would be expected, lest his presence should embarrass the plot. He therefore announced to Sarah that he had just received intelligence which made it indispensable for him to return without delay; but that he would be absent only a few weeks, before he would rejoin her.

"What! leave me here alone, father?" said Sarah, with great surprise.

"Yes; leave you, my love, for a few days only. You

cannot fail to amuse yourself, meantime, in this charming retreat. There are many renowned locations of Indian warfare in this neighborhood, so graphically described by Campbell, the poet, which you will naturally desire to visit, and which will fill up the time to my return; and then we will go over the ground in company. These vexatious business calls, — I cannot endure them just now! They are like a windmill in Paradise; but destiny is upon me, and I must submit."

"If I must do without you, my honored father, I will try to submit. He who has always watched over my happiness will preserve me still. What His providence directs, may that be my choice evermore!"

Their parting was in the highest degree tender and touching. Three times, after reaching the gate in front of the mansion, he returned to clasp her again in his arms, and to imprint the burning kisses of a love amounting almost to madness. And the third time he fairly bore her sylph-like form to the side of the coach, as if it were an appendage of his own person, which could not be torn away without a fatal breach upon the vital organs. At length, by a violent effort, he leaped into the coach, which instantly bounded off like lightning, leaving the heart of both father and daughter palpitating under the rude shock upon its tenderest sympathies.

Before a week had elapsed, Sarah received a letter from Terracegreen, in the handwriting of her father, to inform her that a suit had been instituted for his estate in that quarter, under pretext of a prior title, and he had been compelled to leave the city instantly to defend himself. The letter went on further to state that a material witness in the case had removed to Missouri, and he saw no means of protecting his property without going in person to look him up. "And,

my dear Sarah," the letter went on to say, "is there no way of saving me the pain of so long a separation from you? This question has been in my mind ever since I found myself compelled to go, and I now write to suggest that you go also. I know you have long wished to explore the prairies of that distant and extraordinary country; and, in complying with this request, you will receive to yourself, I trust,— certainly impart to your doting father,— the purest delight."

Sarah was not much discomposed by this unexpected proposition, because all the arts of the Marmots were put in requisition to prepare her for it. Soon after the departure of her father, they began to talk to her of a delightful resort they had at Sylvan Creek, in Missouri; of the pleasure they found in dividing their time between that and Wyoming; of the gorgeousness of prairie scenery, and of its pleasing contrast with their present mountain home; and a thousand enchanting stories were added, most ingeniously suited to win upon the fervid imagination of Miss Harcourt. Just before her father's letter came to hand, Mr. Marmot said he had received intelligence which made it necessary for him immediately to visit this fairy land. Much regret was expressed that his wife and Sarah should be left behind, when the latter would reply by saying how much pleasure she should feel in seeing the prairies, and how sorry she was she had not arranged with her father to do so this summer, and then they might all go together.

"O, my dear," Marmot would say to his wife, "must I leave you and Miss Harcourt behind? Will you not both accompany me? It will be so delightful!"

"Yes, Louis," said Mrs. Marmot, "write Mr. Harcourt on the subject; and, when he learns Sarah's wishes, he will no doubt join us, and we will all go together."

That evening they were all overwhelmed with delight by receiving Mr. Harcourt's letter, proposing to take Sarah with him to Missouri. Accordingly, Sarah answered at once, informing her father of Mr. Marmot's call in the same direction, of his estate on Sylvan Creek, and proposing that he should go on immediately and do his business, preparatory to meeting them on their arrival at that place. In due course of mail another letter was received from her father, agreeing to the arrangement, and saying that he had already left, and would meet her in a few weeks at Sylvan Creek. This letter concluded in her father's own peculiar style of affection and gallantry.

"I never knew how much I loved you till this separation. I realize it much more than in your school-day absences. Then I had not known you as a companion,— an equal. I parted with you as a prattling girl, whose absence, though painful, I could very well endure. But now I part with you as a companion,— yea, a superior, for so I feel you to be, as being the living embodying of one whom I always accounted better than myself. My only solace is the hope of soon folding you again in my fond embrace. Adieu, darling Sarah, adieu, cries the heart, the whole being, of your affectionate FATHER."

Everything was now arranged for their immediate departure. But no letter had yet been received from Douglass. Sarah protested she would not leave till one came. Soon after this determination was known, a letter came, in which Charles stated,—"I may not write so often as formerly, as I am under an unusual pressure of study. But our vows involve this item, you know,— that no writing, and

no neglect of writing shall raise in our minds a momentary suspicion of each other's entire devotedness. I must subscribe myself yours once, yours now, and yours forever,

"CHARLES."

Sarah thought this singular, as he had always protested that writing to her gave him more time and efficiency for every other duty. But this allusion to the private understanding between them, as well as the whole aspect of the letter, left no doubt of its genuineness. She therefore despatched an answer at once, to inform Douglass of her contemplated tour, and where he should address her when the journey to the far West was begun.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WAR TO THE KNIFE.

"We can molest, harass, imprison and ruin a man who pretends to be wiser than his betters; and the more unspotted the character is, the more necessary we think it to take such crushing methods."—HOADLY.

"Shed no blood, if it can be avoided; but, if this heretical doctrine lasts, shed it without hesitation, in order that this abominable sect may disappear from under the heaven."—HENRY VIII.

"THE clock strikes twelve. O, sleep! whither art thou flown? How my nerves twinge,— they dance! Pains have their gambols in this body of mine. Be still, ye imps of darkness! Three nights without sleep! O, God! I am consumed by my zeal for truth and justice. Heavens! what a gig my pains keep up! Now in my head, now in my heart, now all over. They throb, they jump, they dart, like light-

ning! O, mad—mad—mad! I shall go stark mad! The disorders of this ungoverned and ungovernable age allow me no rest. The care of ancient right against modern wrong devolves upon me. I must resist innovation; I must exorcise these restless spirits. Would that I had crushed this Bludgeon viper in the egg, as I did Douglass! But now he is grown, and it costs me all this. O, pain, pain! how I ache!"

Thus soliloquized Skampton at his hotel, within the limits of a metropolitan church, before which he was, the next day, to arraign Bludgeon and Bludgeonism for adjudication. He rang for Sambo, but got no answer. He again rang; and Sambo entered, in dishabille.

"Sambo, why do you not answer my call at once? Will you leave me to die alone?"

"Sambo powerful sleepy,—sleep like 'possum," said the negro, submissively.

"Would to God I had your faculty, you numskull!"

"What 'll massa have?"

"Here, sleepy-head! take this vial and go to the apothecary and get an ounce of laudanum."

"What for does massa want lodlum?" said the servant, scratching his head with perplexity, lest his master might have a design upon his own life.

"What is that to you, saucy fellow? Go, and do as I tell you." Sambo scratched his head in confusion.

At that instant the door-bell rang violently, and the servant hastened to the door, where he met Saphead, who was breathing heavily, like one out of breath from running.

"Slave, does his honor, Mr. Skampton, lodge here?" said Saphead.

"Him have tooth-ache, massa; him tek lodlum."

"I did n't ask *how* he was, fool! but whether he is here."

"He com'd here last night, and now he send Sambo to 'potecary."

"I say, you stupid fellow, is he here *now*,—is he within?"

"Come in, come in, Mr. Saphead," cried Skampton, who heard the noise and came to meet his visitor; "that nigger is dumb with sleep."

"I thought as much, your honor; how are you?" said Saphead.

"The better for your coming. Your long delay has almost driven me mad. Sambo, bring me the vial, and go call up the servants, and order a cup of tea for Mr. Saphead."

Sambo changed his course from the apothecary to the kitchen.

"Which of all the powers has delayed you so long, my friend?"

"The prince of the power of the air, sir," said Saphead; "he has stirred up such a commotion in the elements, there was no resisting him. Have you not seen the flashing lightning, and heard the rattling thunder? O, it is a fearful night! But I 've driv' through thick and thin to meet my engagement."

"Well, how beats the pulse of public sentiment?"

"Right, your honor; never healthier. I have procured the passage of pointed resolutions against Bludgeon and Bludgeonism in all the public bodies, from Maine to Texas. Yes, even Maine is retching fearfully, and will soon vomit up this detestable law. Temperance men themselves gi's in that there is more drinking there now than ever."

"Good! good! glorious!" said Skampton, brightening up.

"I shall sleep now. Your coming, my good friend, is better than a hundred anodynes."

I have said that Saphead was a puff of Skampton, and this was one of the occasions in which he had blown the windy nothing over the breadth of the land. He had sent him to manufacture public sentiment against Bludgeon, temperance innovations, and the Maine Law. In his mission Saphead thought himself triumphantly successful, because all the anti-temperance feeling naturally centered in him, like feculent humors in an ulcer; and he made the common mistake of supposing that it included the great body of society. With all Saphead's ungrammatical and ridiculous blunders, still his head contained enough to throw around him a blaze of glory in a fifteen minutes' speech, especially if he occupied them in figures, and parables, and quaint sayings, to make people laugh. But, like many others, he did not know that his strength lay in saying little; and, hence, if time was allowed him, he was sure to destroy the effect of his eloquence by saying too much. In the tour which he had just made, he had addressed public bodies who could allow him only about fifteen minutes; and, so much time on one topic,—Bludgeonism in its various connections,—and, of course, repeating the same, over and over again, from day to day, had produced a powerful sensation. The object was to prepare the denomination for ecclesiastical proscription against the great movement-maker and all his innovations. Skampton and his party had tried the law and failed, and now their only asylum was the church. They managed their cause ingeniously. They did not appear before the public under the bald aspect of opposing the temperance reform, but of staying the plague of doctrinal and practical innovation upon their venerable church with which this reform had allied itself. No one can

appreciate the strength of denominational prejudice. It is an unshorn Samson with the gates of Gaza on his shoulders; and thousands of temperance men were borne away by it, to take a stand against a cause they loved, by being made to believe that it was innovating upon their cherished religious opinions and ecclesiastical usages. South of Mason and Dixon's line, also, Saphead managed to array on his side the whole strength of the present exacerbated pro-slavery feeling. He made the people there believe that, as soon as this giant innovation had emptied the contents of the groggeries into the gutter, it would continue its desolating march over all the sunny South, breaking every chain, putting knives into the hands of the slaves for the throats of their masters, and deluging the land in blood. The fears of minds little accustomed to reason are easily excited against everything new in legislation, in ecclesiastical usage, and in religious opinion; and hence Saphead's popgun was quite as effective as veritable powder and lead. He could make a noise, and that was all that was needed. That was really more conclusive with the mass of mind than well-conducted trains of reasoning.

"Hark!" cried Skampton, after a moment's pause; "do I not hear voices?"

"Yes," said Saphead; "there are persons in the hall."

"It must be Treadmill, then; for he, too, was to have met me here last evening."

Sambo now ushered in Dr. Treadmill.

"My dear Treadmill, I am happy to see you, though late."

"Late! who could be early, such a night as this? What! you here too, my good friend Saphead?"

"Yes, I here, doctor, and from the midst of this terrible storm, too. Not all Jove's thunder could defeat my engagement with his honor. There 's too much at stake."

"Too much at stake," repeated Skampton, anxiously. "Well, Treadmill, what 's the news? Have you followed up the track of Bludgeon?"

"Yes, and good news, too!"

"Did you see Mr. Dumble?"

"Yes, your honor, and he says he has been thrown out of business, and kept out, too, by this braying ass; and he 'll tell a story a mile long to our church against him."

"Good! glorious! how many witnesses besides shall we have?"

"About five hundred, I think."

"Only five hundred! I hoped it would be a thousand."

"But they 'll make up in mettle what they lack in numbers. I have one hundred rum-selling deacons, in whom rum, religion and the deaconship, unite in a three-fold cord, that cannot be easily broken."

"Well, have you seen Judge Gwimble, Governor Groundsell, Hon. Mr. and Mrs. Guboine, Esquire Tornant, President Fooltop, and all the divines and civilians of whom I spoke to you?"

"Yes, all; and, to a man, they say the law is unconstitutional; that it is abridging a man's natural freedom not to allow him to get drunk, and a violation of the first sentences in that great charter of our national rights, the Declaration of Independence, which says that 'all men were born free and equal.' And they ask, confidently, 'What freedom there is to a man who cannot drink, when, where, and as much as he pleases?' You can rely upon their voice, their vote, and their vouchers, in your venerable judicature."

"Excellent! my heart overflows with gratitude. I shall sleep now. Sambo, get my bed in readiness, my good fellow; my pains are quiet without laudanum. I have had a suffer-

ing time, gentlemen, as you may imagine. The zeal of the Lord consumes me. I have not hands, money and influence, enough to keep down these wild beasts of innovation. They still prowl around fearfully, and ever and anon break in upon the precious enclosure which I am set to guard. Sleep has been out of the question so long that I am getting used to living without it."

"Men that serve the public ought not to sleep," said Dr. Treadmill, who, after much vacillating, to save his bacon in other quarters, had finally chosen the least of two evils, and gone decidedly against Bludgeonism. Skampton had employed him in private, as he had Saphead in public. All three had arranged to meet at this place, the previous evening, that they might bring their labors to a focal point, in their assaults upon the great movement-maker before an ecclesiastical tribunal. Everything having turned out so much better than Skampton feared, he had little difficulty in sleeping soundly the rest of the night.

Excess of government is one of the great evils of life. Society is fingered and manipulated till it has come to be like a tree pruned to its death, or a child subjected to a training so purely artificial as to repress the forces of nature, and bring on decay. A healthful freedom of development is too little known. This is true of trade, religion, learning, everything. Concatenated opinions in the form of a creed, guarded by the watch-dogs of ignorance, prejudice, place, position, veneration for antiquity, narrow-mindedness, incapacity to appreciate the march of reason and the progress of the human intellect, and a thousand yelping curs from their dark and obscene kennels, unite their force to keep back the improvements for which the race have so long sighed, but sighed in vain. How long have we struggled to reach our present

vantage-ground of legislation against the liquor traffic,—a traffic which has entailed more woes upon mankind than all the wars which have desolated the earth! The throes of ages have at length given birth to what we call freedom in our own country,—a freedom which, alas! still holds three millions of men as chattels, to be bought and sold in the shambles! Opinion struggled through two hundred generations, in the midst of imprisonment, confiscation, fire and fagot, to reach its present partial emancipation, and to enjoy the sorry satisfaction of being punished with nothing worse than the loss of place, the blight of character, and the bark of those who cannot bite! Nothing but chains and slavery, to keep back the march of mind, is gained by this over-action in government. An honest, high-minded and vigorous judiciary, to restrain the suicidal passions, is the great desideratum. This, backed up by a legislation that does not legalize wrong,—a preventive legislation against the causes of crime, and against sacrificing right to interest,—will gain all the great purposes of society. The rest must be left to the innate energy of man. He will work out for himself a better destiny than these perpetual fingerers and manipulators of society will work out for him. All arbitrary measures fetter the expansion of enterprise, and coërce things into unnatural channels. Except as directed against the savage passions and the crime-producing occupations and agencies, they subtract from the world's prosperity.

But, if excess of government is an evil, what shall we say of over-action in private influence and responsibility? The physical coërcion of law the individual has to supply by raising his personal influence to a commanding position. The one acts through a *posse comitatus*, and the other by chicanery and contrivance. "Egotism," says Coleridge, "con-

sists not in speaking of our concerns with hearty good-will, but rather in requiring that the feelings, desires and opinions of others, should be brought into strict conformity to our own. Thus the man of seventy who scoffs at the innocent ambition of the boy, or the elderly lady who speaks with contempt of love tales, are egotists." This was the vice of Skampton. He had one of those consciences which feels the pinch of everybody's sins more than his own, and especially those sins which he deemed most prejudicial to his own interests and predilections. Whatever influences sprang up and prevailed without his sanction, he never failed to regard with distrust; and how much more so, when his own investments and incomes were implicated! He knew, he felt, that he and his conservative clique were by common consent the umpire in settling denominational questions; and he took advantage of his position in this respect to coërce the body, much against the will of a numerical majority, into proscriptive measures in reference to Bludgeon and the temperance movement. The public mind in his church was drilled to the feeling that whatever Skampton and his party, as reflected from Riverton Seminary, decreed, must of course be executed.

But Bludgeon had a way of his own. He cared not for the favor of Skampton, or any of his emissaries. A certain impulse from within was the guide and measure of his conduct. The difference of temperament and training in the two men was too strong a tendency to schism for any denominational platform to restrain. Bludgeon was not only an extreme temperance agitator, but he went for reform in everything,— in opinion, in church polity, in all the interests of human life. He believed that nothing had yet been done or spoken so well but it might be bettered. Bludgeon drew after him the masses; but Skampton the learning, the press,

the aristocracy of wealth, and all the best influences in the sect,— that is, best in the sense of the world, but not in fact, — for the masses are always nearer right than the aristocracy. Reforms begin with them, and reach the dignitaries only when they can keep their places no longer without adopting them. For some years this natural enemy of Skampton gave him no concern. He could not suppose that the Mapleton rowdy would come to much, any way. "His brief day will soon be over, when people will become sick of him," he was accustomed to say, when Bludgeon's doings were spoken of in his presence. But, so far otherwise was the fact, that Bludgeon went on increasing, till all the world "wondered after him," and the influence of Skampton and his conservatists was becoming to him like the green withes to Samson. The conservative party, with its leader, felt itself constrained, therefore, to lay heavy hands on the great movement-maker.

"But how shall I proceed?" was a question which long agitated Skampton's mind. He finally satisfied himself that his first step was to destroy Bludgeon's character, and to have him proscribed as a liar and slanderer. Nor did he lack materials for such a work. No; few men exposed weaker points than Bludgeon did to his enemies. He was by no means careful in his sayings and doings. Skampton, therefore, prepared his charges and specifications to bring before the judicial tribunal of his denomination. To this end he sent Saphead to manufacture public sentiment against the common enemy, and Treadmill to drill to service the persons who were to constitute his court and his witnesses. Skampton was not a hasty man in his movements. He always took time to do well whatever he did at all. And in this case he had been for years occupied in bringing together the material

and the force for a fatal assault upon the great movement-maker. The arbiters of Bludgeon's fate were finally assembled. The morning dawned beautifully after a night of storm, and four hours' sleep had restored Skampton's feelings to a tone of elasticity. It was to him "the sun of Austerlitz." When he appeared in assembly, however, his countenance was sallow, his eyes sunken, his brow cloudy, and he had the aspect of one who was consuming by inward fire.

In taking the names of the tribunal, it was suggested by one of the scribes whether their honorable titles should be appended; whereupon it was settled, by vote, that each one should have the benefit of all his titles, that their decision might have the greater weight. This circumstance led to an amusing incident, which, though trifling in itself, must not pass unnoticed. In taking the names, a farmer-looking man gave his name as Harry Straight, V.D.M.*

"What did you say, sir?" said the chairman, with some surprise.

"My name is Harry Straight, V.D.M.," replied the man.

"The chair would ask the member what he means by V.D.M., where he got the title, and what object he has in giving it on this floor?"

"The meaning of V.D.M.?" said Mr. Straight; "I thought all the world understood that. It means Vermont Democratic Minister."

"Vermont Democratic Minister!" exclaimed the chair, when the whole audience burst into a roar of laughter.

"You see, Mr. Chairman," said Mr. Skampton, "that the object of the member is to cast contempt upon this venerable

* Once assumed by old ministers, meaning with them Minister of the Word of God.

body. I think his conduct merits expulsion, and I therefore move that he be expelled.

"And may it please the moderator," said Mr. Straight, "I meant no offence. I ask pardon, if I 've offended. I observed you all had handles to your names, for the public to take hold of, and I would not be out of fashion. You ask where I got the title. I get it from the fact, sir; I am from Vermont, am a democrat, and a minister, which makes me a Vermont Democratic Minister. Have I not as good a right to take to myself a title which expresses the truth, as others have those which are false? You have on this floor A.M.'s, who are masters of no arts except those of folly and weakness; D.D.'s, who are not competent to teach the first lessons in divinity; and LL.D.'s, who are ignorant of the most familiar laws of right and wrong. And now, because I take a title which expresses the truth, you have me up for expulsion!"

"Order! order!" cried the chair. "Gentlemen, the motion is on the expulsion of Mr. Straight, of Vermont, for contempt of this honorable body. Are you ready for the question?"

"Ready,—give us the question!" cried many voices.

"Yes, turn him overboard with despatch," said Skampton, who felt himself personally insulted by what the accused had said about LL.D.'s, a title which had lately been conferred upon him by Diddington College.

"Those who are for expelling Mr. Straight say Ay," said the chair. "Ay," cried the multitude, with stentorian lungs. "Those opposed say No." "No" was faintly whispered by a few timid ones, whose manner seemed to ask pardon for presuming so far.

So the chair pronounced Mr. Straight expelled for con-

tempt. Many felt it to be a cruel act, for they saw that Straight had assumed the title in the simplicity of his heart, so as to be in fashion, and not to cast contempt on any one. Another was expelled for sympathizing with Bludgeon in his opposition to slavery,—a subject on which the latter had practised a severity bordering on cruelty. This was necessary incense to the Southern members of the ecclesiastical court. Having thus expelled democracy and abolitionism, they were prepared for business.

The way finally cleared, Skampton produced his charges and specifications. He began with those points which would render the accused most ridiculous and most obnoxious to the religious prejudices of the court, on the principle of all similar persecutions, which is, first to clothe the victim in the skins of wild beasts and then set on the dogs. When an errorist is painted as criminal, why should he not be punished as such?

The first charge was, that Bludgeon had professed himself able to teach men how to live till they were as old as Methuselah. And it is true he had gone from temperance to dietetics, and prescribed what people laughingly call saw-dust, or certain principles of eating and sleeping, which, duly followed up, he said, would insure a man's living till he was a hundred and fifty or two hundred years old. And it is possible that, in the heat of speaking, he might have measured the life of his disciples by that of the oldest of the patriarchs; for Bludgeon was not a precise man.

The next charge was, that of denying wine in the Lord's Supper, which rendered Bludgeon especially obnoxious to the prejudices of his sect; and that too with good reason, for no man of common sense can doubt that the juice of the grape is essential to the scriptural administration of that ordinance.

The third charge was to the effect that the wine into which

our Saviour converted water was the *un*fermented juice of the grape, in which the accused may have made himself ridiculous, but certainly not criminal. Still, it was an item to prepare the way for worse things to follow, and to predispose the court to the conviction that so illogical and unscriptural a reasoner was not fit to be tolerated in the sect. Until we can find a vial of that veritable wine among the relics of the Catholic church, to enable us to test its quality, this must remain an apocryphal question, and not a sufficient ground for condemning the temperance cause, or its over-zealous agitators.

After thus arming the prejudices of the court against the accused, Skampton proceeded to the graver charges of *lying* and *slander*. Under the first there were at least a hundred specifications, of which the three lies nailed by Pegan in Bludgeon's great battle were the head and front. For the convenience of reference, they were called lie one, two, three; or the *hoarseness* lie, the *four hours' sleep* lie, and the *money* lie. This was parliamentary, and saved words, of which there was a deluge, after all. The *slander* specifications were equally numerous, and much better sustained; for Bludgeon was a most unconscionable man in dealing with private character. The prosecuting document displayed great tact and talent. It was the work of time, and set off the weak points of a weak man in their worst light.

After reading this document, witnesses were called to the number of hundreds, and days were consumed on the several charges and specifications. When the court was thoroughly wearied out and bewildered, the happy thought at length occurred, to ask Bludgeon whether the sayings and doings alleged against him were true.

"They are," said Bludgeon, promptly. "I said what

they affirm about my hoarseness, about my sleep, about my income, about Gilfort, Skampton, Pegan, and all the rest of them; and I reäffirm the same before this court. It was all true, and I defy the world to prove it false!"

"Very well," said the prosecutor, "I am prepared to show that all these things are false and slanderous."

The presiding officer, alarmed at the prospect of being detained days and weeks more in this jungle of evidence, proposed that Skampton's statements be admitted as settling the morality or immorality of the sayings and doings in question. "We have entire confidence in the honorable gentleman's decisions on the subject. He has gone fully into the details, and knows more about them and their character than we shall, after a month's investigation." Whereupon the question was put and carried, that Skampton should be umpire in the case. Singular as this decision may appear, it will not surprise those at all acquainted with ecclesiastical adjudication. Our courts of law are clumsy modes of doing justice, at the best, with all the light of statute and precedent; but what shall we say of a court without statute or precedent, in which everything goes by influence and personal predilection?

"God knows," said Skampton, rising and looking the image of injured justice, "how much I have labored to have justice done in this case, and to save his bleeding cause." He then touched upon the slander of that renowned man, Samuel Gilfort; of that accomplished editor, Peter Pegan, and others; and then upon the injustice done upon himself, who had ever acted conscientiously, and had poured out his money like water upon the interests of humanity. "And now, gentlemen, to be charged with blood, the blood of Mapleton citizens, the blood of men consumed by the Kamtschatka

whales, and blood from pole to pole; O! gentlemen, gentlemen!" exclaimed Skampton, beginning to weep, being exceedingly nervous, "these charges are more than human nature can bear!" The court was greatly moved, and began to weep too, looking daggers at poor Bludgeon.

As soon as the prosecuting party resumed his seat, Dr. Treadmill arose and said, he had "hoped that this movement would die a natural death long ago, and thus that his church would be saved the trouble of adjudicating upon it. There had been a prospect," he added, "that the hoarseness of this man Bludgeon would end in bronchitis, and bronchitis in silence, and so that he would have been laid aside without our help. But, since neither of these events has occurred, I take it we ought to do what Providence has neglected."

Timothy Bragg followed, saying that he "had probably been the greatest movement-maker in the country, under the old temperance pledge, when only ardent spirits were proscribed. But, since this Bludgeon had come, on with his crew, to berate everything that intoxicates, even to the juice of the grape and the sparkling product of malt and hops, they had taken the wind out of his sail, and he felt himself cruelly neglected. If the people have a mind to be fooled out of these innocent, healthful and necessary beverages, I am not the man to go with them. Hence, I give my voice against the accused."

Gulliver Saphead now rose, with great pomp, and delivered himself as follows: — "Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,— in giving my voice in this case, I can only say that Bludgeon and Bludgeonism are 'a cake not turned.' This is Bible, and I like to keep to that. Whether it is a johnny-cake, a hoe-cake, or a no-cake,— all of which I have met with in my travels,— is not material to my purpose. It is an *un*turned

cake, and, of course, burnt on one side and raw on the other. Now, this is the precise character of this man and his movement. He inflames the zeal of the people against rum, which I take to be a good creature, as well as wine and beer; and thus he has got them into the way of pouring it into the gutter. This is extravagant. It is coal or dough, dough or coal. There is nothing right about it. If he were content to bake himself so and there stop, I should say nothing; but he is baking everybody else so, too. All his followers are coal or dough, dough or coal. This is wrong. Think you I would pronounce *for* a cake which is all dough or all coal? No; my verdict is Guilty."

Thus, prudential considerations, influence and prejudice, not truth and evidence, carried the day, and Bludgeon and his movement were compelled to walk the plank. The following notice soon after appeared in Pegan's paper, headed "UNPARALLELED CRIMES. — This fellow Bludgeon has been found guilty, in a tribunal of his church, of high misdemeanors, and has been expelled. Under the garb of reform, he has slandered private character, has waged war upon our lawful and necessary occupations, and, to gain his ends, has practised chicanery and lying to an incredible extent. But he is, at length, exposed and put down, by the untiring exertions of that true friend of the public, the Honorable Michael Skampton, LL.D., who has won for himself immortal renown."

CHAPTER XXV.

TO THE WESTWARD, HO! — THE MISTAKE DISCOVERED.

"Westward the star of empire takes its way,
* * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * *
Time's noblest offspring is the last." BERKELY.

"I 've wandered east, I 've wandered west,
I 've borne a weary lot:
But in my wanderings, far or near,
Ye never were forgot." WILLIAM MOTHERWELL.

THE growth of party may be traced to three causes: individual peculiarities, the nature of the times, and persecution. The first is the seed, the second the soil, and the third the husbandman.

Bludgeon's intense individuality and iron will were, of themselves, a sufficient partisan nucleus. A portion of society were as sure to follow such a mind as flocks of wild geese their noisy leader. Temperance times further inflamed the schismatic tendency. The excited public mind was feeling its way towards new light on the subject of using and legislating in reference to intoxicating drinks, and was easily led into ways devious and strange. A richer soil could not have received the falling seed of Bludgeonism; it yielded a thousand-fold.

Still, the Skampton persecution did most of all to ripen and perfect the schismatic fruit; and when it was ripe ecclesiastical excision shook the tree, and scattered the seed all abroad, to bring forth its kind without stint or measure.

This act relieved the movement of its last restraint, and let it loose upon society, to work out its own destiny in its own way. Till then, Bludgeon and his followers had respected their denominational platform, and could not adventure upon measures which they esteemed decidedly derogatory to it. But now he stood by himself, the "world all before him, and Providence his guide." His party was, henceforth, his church, and his own wild impulses his creed and his ritual. The temperance movement was his religion, his ethics, his politics, his jurisprudence, his business, and the sum of his being.

Thus, as usual, this act of ecclesiastical excision immeasurably increased the evil which it was designed to cure. It gave Bludgeon a hold upon the public sympathies far greater than ever, and made him a much more formidable antagonist. The Skampton conservative party could have done nothing so much to *his* advantage, and so destructive to *their* own cause. It turned over to him a numerical majority even of their own church. Skampton's purse still retained with him Diddington College and Riverton Seminary, though, in point of fact, the heart and sympathies of both these institutions were with Bludgeon. Indeed, there was no soul on the Skampton side, for it had all evaporated, or gone over to the other party. The one had set up a golden idol for its divinity, while the other was full of the warm blood and gushing sympathies of actual life.

While the cause of temperance gained by persecution, Bludgeon was unhappily precipitated to still greater extremes. From the injuries inflicted upon health and morals by alcohol, he proceeded to those of gluttony and excess of every kind, which he began now to represent as equally degrading and demoralizing with intemperate drinking. Not content with

the simple question of the *quantity* which it is safe for us to eat, he proceeded to that of the *quality*, affirming that man is a herbivorous animal,— that animal food is, in all cases and in any quantity, injurious to his health, corrupting to his moral feelings, and the great means of reducing his age from that of the antediluvian patriarchs to the present narrow span of three-score years and ten. It involves cruelty to animals, which are annually knocked in the head, or barbarously butchered, by millions, in order to pamper in us an unnatural and preposterous appetite, and degrades us to the rank of cats, dogs, wolves, and tigers. His descriptions of a piece of a hog or an ox, all reeking with blood and oil, would make an audience loathe it as food, and not a few would go away resolved never to taste it again. The previous process of butchering and flaying, in all its disgusting details, of animals innocent, beautiful, playful, and verging towards human intelligence, was a fruitful theme for Bludgeon's genius, and a means of touching the sympathies of an audience almost equal to the murder of the innocents of Bethlehem, or the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve.

Bludgeon carried his views to such an extreme as to lose the sympathy of the wise and discreet among his temperance friends. They could not believe that his system of dietetics would realize the length of days of which he was so sanguine. True, he fenced his statements round with various modifications. He did not say that such a length of days would be realized in the first generation; but only that, if the race would rigidly follow up his system for a century or two, the causes of disease and death would gradually disappear, and the time might come when its life would be as enduring as in its earlier generations. These extravagances of the man and his party came to be regarded by the public as identical with

the temperance cause, to the no small damage of its interests. It was thought by many to be unscriptural and dangerous, also, because these ultraists deemed it necessary to their success to deny the use of wine in the Lord's Supper. Many of their churches actually adopted water sweetened with molasses in the administration of that ordinance. This was a just cause of offence to every right-minded man in the country.

The consequence was, that Bludgeon found himself in danger of being swept away by the reäction of his extreme views, to prevent which he determined upon emigrating, with so many as would go with him, to a land where he might carry out, unmolested and unopposed, his peculiar system of dietetics. Oregon was fixed upon as the theatre of the great experiment, which he proposed to reach by the overland route. Upon this enterprise he now turned all his force. He travelled from place to place like a flaming meteor, to obtain enlistments for his colonial plan of dietetics and long life. In a short time his army swelled to a numerous host, who disposed of their estates, and prepared to take up their line of march. Still, he continued his lecturing, to increase the number. His paintings of man, in the present forms of society, with habits of eating, drinking, dressing and sleeping, to reduce his life to little more than that of a goose, were graphic and powerful. He made the people feel that death was in their habits, and life only in an escape with him to Oregon.

As a place of rendezvous for his gathering forces he appointed one of the prairies beyond the Mississippi, to which point they were tending from all quarters. The dietetic faith of all was absolute,—their hopes glowing. Old men and maidens, young men and children, rich and poor, black and white, all grades and varieties of human society, having disposed of their effects to defray the expenses of their journey,

were now on their way, in groups of tens, fifties, and hundreds. Here a company of maiden ladies,— toothless, tottering, shrivelled and blighted, by the vain endeavor after that boon dearest to all hearts, the privilege of loving and of being loved,—dragged their weary limbs along, with a fanatical certainty of renewing their youth in the Eden of their destination. Here virgin beauty was linked with wrinkled deformity; vigorous manhood with tottering age; idiotic imbecility with gifted intellect; the cultivated with the uncultivated; all fused like metals into one mass by the dominant fanaticism.

Facts like these are eminently significant. They show how eagerly the heart of man looks and longs for a portion better than earth has to afford. It is not surprising that Utopian ideas of another location, or of the reörganization of society, should beget in multitudes the desire of change. They forget that the evil is within, and must defeat the purpose of change until it is eradicated. None but the great Nazarene ever understood where to begin the work of human improvement. "Ye must be born again" is a truth which lays the axe at the root of the tree, and provides to eradicate from the heart those passions which generate our woes, and defeat all the ends of outward reformation.

Leaving Bludgeon and his party to pursue their fanatical journey, we will now turn our attention to Mr. Harcourt. When that gentleman left Wyoming, he purposed to be absent but a few weeks, that he might watch the effect of his plot upon the mind of his daughter. He hoped, against hope, that her feelings would undergo a change, and the magic influence of the Marmots would set her heart free from its entanglements to a drunkard's son. He felt in his sober moments that there was no reason to expect it; but still the illusion was too sweet to be exchanged for reality. There

were people who could do in this way what he could not; and, from the character given the Marmots, on such excellent authority, he believed they were of the number, and this was his only light on the subject. He had enjoined Sarah to write him daily, resolved, if her letters indicated no change, to abandon his scheme, be the consequences what they might.

But no letter came. He watched the post-office with nervous anxiety, day by day, during which time suspense produced in his excited imagination its usual brood of dark forebodings and tormenting fears. If anything should happen to his darling child, he felt that he never could forgive himself the step he had taken. Indeed, he was uneasy at the deceit which he had already practised upon one so frank, so confiding, so loving and so loved. "Sarah, Sarah, sweet Sarah! my darling, my life! I am undone without you!" he would often say to himself. "O! should I be deceived in the persons to whom I have intrusted her,—no, no! it is impossible! — but, should I be deceived, what a monster of a father will she have reason to think me! Well, though I deceive, I love her; yes,— too tenderly to be happy in her absence. My head reels, my reason totters! I shall go mad, mad, if the least of my fears were realized!"

After thus being literally on embers for two weeks, a letter came, apologizing for her delay, by ascribing it to the extreme happiness of her new situation. And the letter significantly adds, "I find myself undergoing a great change on other subjects, which have caused you, dear father, much anxiety. I have not heard from C. D. since I came to this place; and am becoming more and more careless whether I ever hear again."

This letter, especially the last sentence, more than compensated for his long suspense. And he waited another and

another week, with more calmness than before, but still not without dark surmises, which lingered like spectres before the vision of his mind, yet fearing to visit his daughter, lest it should prejudice the object of his taking her to Wyoming. At length, another letter came, full of affection for him, and deprecating the uneasiness she had occasioned him by her rash purpose of connecting herself with a family whose vices rendered them so unfit for the society of the pure and the good. "But, thank Heaven! I have learned my mistake in season to escape the ruin awaiting me. Dear father," it is warily added, "I fear the effect of former associations, and, much as I wish to see you, it is perhaps advisable that you should delay your visit a few weeks." This letter, confirmed by the private correspondence of Mr. Marmot, gave him inexpressible pleasure; and he acted upon the suggestion of delaying his visit. Thus the deluded man was baited by an occasional letter till the first of August. His mind, meantime, was ill at ease, and his use of the bottle was more deep and dangerous. Indeed, his blood was constantly charged with the poison, to the verge of intoxication, which, no doubt, had the double effect of making him the easier dupe and of precipitating the crisis which ensued. How it is possible for men, with an earnest love of life, to be deluded into keeping their blood constantly charged with an inflammatory ingredient that could not fail immeasurably to increase the chances of death, in the event of accident or disease, is passing strange. One would suppose that an instinct of self-preservation would deter them from drinking, if nothing else; and that intemperance would be confined to those who have no motive or desire of life.

Douglass was also as much perplexed by the interruption of letters as the father of Sarah. But he could not doubt,

and would not resign himself to the gloomy suspicions which would ever and anon glance unbidden across the horizon of his mind. He had solemnly promised not to let the interruption of letters, or anything else, shake his confidence in her devoted attachment. But vows are easier made than kept. When week after week passed, without bringing him a line from her pen, his nights became sleepless, his days gloomy and listless, and he lost all command of himself.

Finally, a letter came from Sarah, bearing date, as usual, at New York. But still, it did not allay his fears, though, in point of fact, it approximated her usual strain of correspondence. There seemed something different in it, however, — something strange; not so much in style and mechanical execution, as in the spirit breathing through it. It seemed not to gush up, as usual, from the heart's purest affections, but was formal, artificial, constrained, and, even in its affectionate touches, it failed to blend in with his sympathies. He felt more uneasy after receiving it than before, and abruptly left for New York, to inquire into the cause.

When he arrived at Mr. Harcourt's, he met from that gentleman a cool reception; and when he inquired how Sarah was, and whether she was well, the laconic reply was,

"Well, but not to be seen."

"Not to be seen, Mr. Harcourt! You are not in earnest?" replied Douglass, perfectly confounded, and hardly knowing what he said.

"Do you think me capable of deceiving, sir?" said Harcourt, still more coolly.

"By no means; I only meant to say that your daughter might justly accuse me of great rudeness and treachery, for me to come here and return without seeing her."

"I have the means of knowing that it would be her great-

est pleasure never to see you again," said the deluded Harcourt, confident of the truth of what he said, and anxious to get rid of his unwelcome visitor as soon as possible.

"It is false!" said Douglass, earnestly; "I know it is false!"

"Do you mean to give me the lie?" said Harcourt, in the highest degree incensed.

"Certainly not; I only meant to say that you must be mistaken; and, as evidence that I have reason for what I say, please read this," handing him his last letter from Sarah. Mr. Harcourt read it.

"Somebody has served you a trick," he replied, handing back the letter. "My daughter has not been in this place for nearly three months, and that letter cannot be from her."

"Where is she, then?" inquired Douglass, in blank astonishment.

"That is a secret she does not wish me to reveal."

"Sir, you are cruel to me, and still more so to your daughter."

"I do my daughter a kindness. She has learned the character of your family, and abhors it as much as I do."

"Yes; she learned it from me on the very day you introduced me to her. I have nothing to conceal from her or any one on that subject. My poor father's infirmity presses on my heart too grievously to be kept a secret."

"It ought to have deterred you from presuming so far with a well-bred lady. But she is cured, and that is enough," said Harcourt, turning on his heel, and saying to a servant in waiting, "Jim, attend this man to the door."

"For the love your daughter bears you, I would not stay to give you pain," said Douglass, as he left the house.

That was a dreadful moment to Charles Douglass. As he

walked leisurely from the house, so lately the witness of a bliss unspeakable, in the society of one so much beloved and adored, but now lost, forever lost, he feared, the universe seemed to him a blank. An intense summer sun flamed above; and, instead of leaving a spot so endeared, so lovely in its memories, even in the gloom now resting upon it, he buried himself in shrubbery overhanging the majestic river, and prayed and longed there to end an agonized life.

"To me, me miserable, there remains no solace but the dumb silence of this desolate spot! Here I would die, here be buried, here resign my soul to that higher world, where rest can alone be found! Proscribed without, and killed within, what solace is left me, this side the grave? No, no! let me go! let me go!"

With the vain hope of quenching these burning sensations, or provoking a fever, to absorb them, he remained all night in that thicket, stretched upon the damp earth, with feelings of desolateness and horror too poignant to be described, too vast to be conceived. All he had felt during his first days in Forestdale, at the idea of being a drunkard's son, now returned upon him with ten-fold power. Then it was imaginary; now it was real: then it was a mere fear of ejectment from his proper social position; now his doom was sealed. The words of Harcourt, that, knowing his father's character, he "ought not to have presumed so far with a well-bred lady," were the more tantalizing for being a reflection of the precise feelings with which his first delicate sentiments towards Sarah were associated. He thought, himself, it was presuming too far in one so unfortunately connected. And now, to have the truth brought home to him by the party most injured by that presumption,—perhaps, too,—a dreadful perhaps!—with the sanction of that dear one who had been so kind as to make

his drunken father no barrier to her heart and her hand,— O, those were ideas too tormenting to be endured.

"Why had she not crushed my tender sentiments in the bud? Why leave them to grow, till they had absorbed in themselves my whole being? Indulgent Father, take the drunkard's son to thyself! Earth has no place for him. Society casts him out as a polluted thing. Wilt not thou, O Lord, take me up?"

But words fall short of the reality. The record of aspiring minds, repressed and crushed by a brutalized and degraded paternity, is known only to the Searcher of all hearts.

"Go, weep as I have wept,
O'er a loved father's fall;
See every promised blessing swept,
Youth's sweetness turned to gall;
Life's fading flowers strewed all the way
That brought me up to manhood's day!"

O, ye who tarry long at the wine, think, think of your children's agony over your fall! Think of the shame in which you send them abroad into society!

After Mr. Harcourt's feelings had subsided, he began to reflect on the letter which Douglass had shown him. That it was his daughter's hand-writing he could not doubt. The sentiments also seemed much the same as if her affections were unchanged. What could he think? — that Sarah had deceived him, or Douglass? He thought her incapable of either. Or was it the trick of some mischievous person? If so, might not the same be true of his own letters from Wyoming? This idea was too horrible to be thought of. Still, he was full of strange suspicions, and therefore started, with all haste, for Wyoming. Judge of the wretched man's

feelings, when, upon driving up to the house of the Marmots, in a state of maddening excitement, eager to have his fears disappointed, and his hopes realized, to find it an empty shell, with grass covering the walks, swallows brooding in the chimneys, and all the signs of utter, hopeless desolation! He ran to the neighbors, in a delirium of suspense, to learn the fate of the family; and all the explanation he could obtain was that, a few months previous, that house had been rented by an unknown family, who had furnished it with great elegance, and then, without making the acquaintance of any one in the neighborhood, had broken up, and gone to parts unknown. The fellow who boxed the furniture said that it was labelled to a southern city,— Charleston or New Orleans,— he could not remember which, though he believed the latter. Even the name by which the strange family had been known was not the same which had been given to Mr. Harcourt,— a circumstance which greatly increased his fears, and confirmed his darkest forebodings.

The poor man ran about for a few hours like a maniac, going again and again into the vacant room which Sarah had occupied, calling her name in tones of plaintive endearment, adding, "Gone, gone! O, O, forever gone! Fate, fate, cruel fate! why did I bring her here? Why intrust her out of my sight? Whither, O whither, has she fled? Fraud, violence, has done this! My darling Sarah could never, of her own free will, have escaped her doting father! No, no! much as he deserved her hatred, she would love him still! Sarah, Sarah, your father loves you, too,— yes, to madness he loves you, though he has treated you thus! Forgive, O, forgive the wrong!" Thus soliloquized the distracted father, in tones that resounded through the vacant halls and rooms like those of a disturbed ghost, lost in a maze of conflicting

sensations, when a hornet, which had suspended its nest to the ceiling, disturbed by his presence, stung him severely just below the eye. The pain brought him to his recollection. He rushed out; and, while occupied in mitigating the venom, reflection returned, and it occurred to him that the Honorable Mr. Skampton was the only one who was really responsible to him for this mysterious disappearance of his daughter. "Mr. Skampton first suggested the plan, and recommended the Marmots as in the highest degree trustworthy. He is too great and good a man to deceive me, and an explanation may be given which will satisfy me that all has been done in good faith, to insure an object dearest to my heart,— Sarah's release from her infatuation."

Without a moment's rest, therefore, he set off for the residence of Mr. Skampton. His anxiety of mind robbed him by the way of appetite for food, but not for drink. His potations were deeper than ever, utterly disqualifying him for rational action, under the trying circumstances in which he was placed. He was even too abstracted, and too much beside himself with strong drink, to shave, change his linen, or wash himself. Upon meeting Mr. Skampton in his library, therefore, he was a sight to look upon. His locks had been suddenly bleached, through the intensity of his emotions, and his eyes were protruding and wildly staring. Skampton stood aghast when his visitor unceremoniously rushed into the room, and could scarcely believe his own eyes, that this should be the gentlemanly Mr. Harcourt whom he had known in his better days.

"My daughter, sir! I come to demand my daughter!" said Harcourt, struggling to repress his emotions, and appear calm.

"Your daughter?" replied Skampton, coolly; "what of your daughter? Why do you ask me? Am I her keeper?"

"Yes, you are her keeper! You made yourself responsible for the good conduct of those to whom I committed her."

"I said, Mr. Harcourt, what I honestly thought,—what I had reason to think," said Skampton, drawing down his face to more than its usual length; "and I have no responsibility in the case, and I hope ——"

"You are a liar!" interrupted the nervous Harcourt, with an oath. "Did you not instigate her separation from me? Did you not pledge me your honor that she should be well treated? Did you not laud the Marmots to the skies? Did you not say she would be as safe with them as in her own father's house? You knave!—you hypocrite!" seizing him by the collar, with insane violence, and hurling him to and fro. Skampton, pale with fear, said, soothingly, "My dear Mr. Harcourt, do pacify yourself! Be not too hasty in condemning an innocent man. Pray, what has happened? Was not your daughter well treated at the Marmots'?"

"No; they have abducted her, and you know it, you scoundrel! They have taken her to parts unknown, and you shall answer for it!" replied Harcourt, still clenching him, and shaking him violently.

"Stay, stay, my good friend," cried Skampton, beginning to fear that his end had come, indeed.

"I will not stay, you perjured villain! I'll let off the last drop of your life's blood, that I will!" said Harcourt, still more furious.

"But, if you kill me, how can I find your daughter?" said Skampton, trembling in every limb, and anxious to release himself from the perilous grasp of an insane man.

"I release you, then, for the sake of sweeter revenge,"

said Harcourt, letting go of him. "I'll prosecute you at the law for conspiring against the liberty and life of an innocent person; and, failing in my suit, I swear, by all the powers above, I will shed the last drop of your blood!" he added, now first bethinking that Skampton had exposed himself to this mode of redress. He started to execute his threat.

"Stay, Mr. Harcourt, for God's sake, stay!" entreated the terrified Skampton. "I had reason to think the Marmots trustworthy."

"What reason had you to think it? Have you known them? Have you personally assured yourself that they are worthy to be trusted?" inquired Harcourt, anxious still to find a clue to Sarah's hiding-place.

"No, not personally. I never saw them, but I had the best possible character of them from that distinguished man, Samuel Gilfort, who assured me that they would cure your daughter of her love affair."

"Great God! is Gilfort your author? Gilfort the instigator of this plot!" exclaimed Harcourt, in despair, understanding full well the knavery of that fellow, and his evil designs upon his daughter.

"He advised it," replied Skampton, meekly.

The whole now glanced before the mind of Mr. Harcourt in a twinkling, that Sarah had been decoyed from him by stratagem, and had been now three months in the power of that arch deceiver. It was too much for his shattered reason. He reeled, staggered, and fell senseless to the floor.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ANOTHER TRAGEDY IN MAPLETON.

"I looked upon the righteous man,
And all our earthly trust;
Its pleasure, vanity and pride,
Seemed lighter than the dust,
Compared with his eternal gain,
A home above the sky!" — MRS. SIGOURNEY.

THERE was an inkling of truth in the surreptitious letter of Mr. Harcourt to Sarah, in reference to a law-suit for the recovery of the Terracegreen estate, on the pretext of a prior title. Such a suit had really been commenced, and Marldon had gone to defend the rights of his client. In doing so, he visited Mapleton, where he became familiarly acquainted with the senior Douglass. He had no mistrust, however, that the wife of his new friend was the same who had been so cavalierly treated in his presence, a few years previous. But Mrs. Douglass knew him well, and did all in her power to keep her husband out of his society, though to no purpose. He was now so totally broken down as to have as little power over himself as his wife had over him. The reöpening of the Skampton groggery had revived his former habits, and drunkenness had been a common thing with him. His home was a scene of terror and desolation. Still, he spent his sober hours, as usual, in looking after his farm.

On a bright summer morning, he went into a distant field to watch over his hay-making, where he was soon joined by Marldon, with the tempting bait of a bottle of superior brandy. They sat down on the green grass in a shady place, and be-

gan their maddening potations. Adjoining the field where they were, fifty acres of heavy timbered land had been cut long enough before to become dry as tinder. The heat was intense; and, in his sober moments, Mr. Douglass would have deemed it an act of madness to fire the aggregated masses of brush, leaves, twigs and logs, which were piled up on all hands over the burdened soil. But now the idea popped into his excited brain; and, with flaming torch in hand, he ran from one end to the other of the windy side, touching with flame the combustible mass. In a short time the whole was a sea of fire. The scene beggars description. A burning city is nothing in comparison, because nature is more exuberant than art, and *all* its growth is combustible; while that of art is, to a great extent, impervious to the fire. Even the scarf-skin covering of the earth, produced by ages of vegetable decay, is food for flame. The exploding gases of the wood made the welkin ring, as with the small arms of embattled legions. The mossy rind of burning logs, twigs, leaves, chips, decayed trees, piles of brush studding the ground like closely-compacted stacks of hay, and an infinite collection of materials dry as tow, all vied with each other to increase the general burning.

Even the clouds suspended over the scene boiled like a caldron, and added their reflected radiance like the arch of an oven, to give the heat accumulated force and destructiveness. At first, the air was close, and the wind was too tardy to ruffle the fiery deluge; but the heat was compact and condensed as in a furnace over the burning fallow, cloud, vapor, smoke, flame, alike pent, struggling, agonized, convolved, like fiends in the lurid fires of hell. The birds flew through the burning air, chattering with fright, or, with seared plumage, falling into the fiercer heat below. The

quadrupeds, sheltered by the brush and logs, or burrowed in the ground, ran in every direction, to cover themselves in the contiguous woods. But it was a vain flight; for the wind had now set up a stiff breeze from the lake, to waft the burning atmosphere into the leeward forest, which was soon seared, and prepared, many acres around, to mingle in the general conflagration. The leafy surface of the ground flamed up into the thicket of overhanging leaves and branches, now prepared to feel the dissolving touch; insomuch that the whole vegetable growth, to the distance of more than a hundred feet above, became an ocean of flame. The scene was terribly grand, awfully sublime!

The whole neighborhood was now in commotion, lest the fire should reach the premises of Farmer Bloodgood. Voices were heard in all directions, crying, "To the woods! to the woods! Bloodgood's premises! Bloodgood's premises!" All hands flew to the woods, and, scraping a circumvallation bare of its leaves, they awaited the raging enemy. He soon appeared, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race, spurning their puny barrier, and making his way, with fearful strides, towards the point of dreaded attack. Bloodgood was exasperated at the imprudence of his neighbor in kindling such a fire in so dry a time, and swore vengeance on him, and the alcoholic demon, which, he believed, had instigated the deed. But Marldon enjoyed the fun with stoical indifference.

A detachment of neighbors — men, women and children — hastened to the scene; some with buckets of water, others with shovels, to smother the flame by means of earth, while others still, with naked hands, fell to the work of removing fences, and depositing the rails beyond the reach of danger. All was vain. Everything seemed converted into powder, to catch flame from falling sparks; and the concave heavens

were like a heated furnace, to relax every muscle, to force sweat from the steaming blood, to extract the sap of wood and the greenness of leaves, and even to involve the standing grass, as well as the new-made hay, in the mighty burning! Nothing could have saved Bloodgood but the timely fall of a shower, to quench the fiery element.

It was now three o'clock of the afternoon. The neighbors had left for home, all except a few to stand sentinel against the enemy. Marldon, with his bottle and his victim, had retired to a shady retreat, to complete the work of intoxication. A partial quiet was restored, with an occasional outburst of fire, to keep the men busy, when they heard the crash of a falling tree, accompanied by cries of agony. They ran in the direction, and soon heard, from a thicket, a voice, saying, "O! O! my God! how this body writhes in pain!" It was Mr. Littlefield, who, ever prompt to guard his people against danger to the extent of his power, had joined his efforts with others, to arrest the fire. Fatigued by exertion, he had crept into a shady place, and fallen asleep; when a tree burnt at the root, where it was partially decayed, fell, and would have instantly killed him, had not the underbrush broken its force. The extent of his injury could only be conjectured by the extremity of his agony.

"O, my dear young friends!" he said to George and Samuel Douglass, who were the first to reach him, "the day of my release is come! Life cannot long hold out under what I endure."

"Death finds you prepared, my dear pastor," said George.

"I am ready, *perfectly* ready. I long for my rest. O! agony! agony! agony!" said the suffering man.

"Sammy, my brother," said George, "will you not go and call Mr. Holliston, while we watch with Mr. Littlefield?"

"Yes; but can we do nothing to relieve you before I go, Mr. Littlefield?" replied Samuel, much affected by the spectacle.

"No; you can do nothing, nor can Mr. Holliston; still, it would give me pleasure to see him, and also my wife and children, before I die. Be so good as to call them also."

Samuel went, with all speed.

"Let me hold your head, and press gently against your side," said one of the neighbors, suiting his action to his words. "There; now don't you feel a little easier?"

"O, no, no! you are very kind, but it is all in vain. My summons has come, and I must go."

It was not long before Samuel returned, accompanied by Mr. Holliston, Mrs. Littlefield, and her three children. Mr. Holliston bled him, but it gave him no relief. His chest was broken in on one side, and there was evidently internal bleeding. He grew deadly pale, and felt a faintness which seemed the precursor of speedy dissolution.

"Just in time, just in time, my poor Mary, to see your poor husband die!" he said, as his wife approached him.

"No, no,—it cannot be!" exclaimed Mrs. Littlefield, sobbing convulsively.

"Yes, it must. God so orders. Have I not told you, Mary, that I should go soon? and why should you weep? Are you not willing that I should go home? Have we not often communed of that sweet home? Have we not talked of the bliss we should there enjoy, when our troubles are all over, and our tears are all dried?"

Mrs. Littlefield, having given vent to the first impulse of woe, now reclined in silence over him, while the warm tears that fell upon his bosom touchingly bespoke the depth of her grief. Overcome by her emotions, she fell into a swoon, from

which she was long in being recovered. Meantime, the children set up a doleful cry, saying,

"O, papa, do not leave us! do not leave us! It will kill mamma! Dear, dear papa! will you leave us?" while they sobbed as if they would break their hearts.

"My dearest children, I will not leave you unless God bids me. You know how good God is. He would not bid me come to him unless he meant in some other way to take care of you. Are you not willing I should go, when *God* calls me?"

"O, no! no! no! dear, dear papa! what will become of us when you are dead?" exclaimed the little ones, with a fresh outburst of agony.

"God will take care of you, my precious children," said the dying father, with emotions too big for utterance, his lips quivering, his tears gushing up from their deepest fountains; and, for a moment, he seemed unmanned. Indeed, the whole company felt the scene to be too affecting for them to endure. They would have carried him home; but they saw that he was too far gone to admit of it. Samuel Douglass did make an effort to raise him gently in his arms, to try the effect; but it gave him so much pain that he was compelled to desist. None showed such a tender, active interest for the dying pastor, and his sufferings, as this young man. Well he might; for he had become hopefully pious through his instrumentality, and an ornament of the church over which he presided.

Recovered, at length, from her swoon, Mrs. Littlefield opened her eyes, and turned them upon her husband, with a look of sweet submission, by which he saw that her agony had passed, and her faith had subdued her misgivings.

"Now, my Mary," he said, wiping his own eyes dry,

"you are yourself again. How much we have prayed that we may honor God in our death! Can we doubt that he will hear us? Come to my side, my adored wife! Let me leave with you my dying advice."

She took her seat by him, saying, "Speak, my precious husband! All you wish shall be done."

"In reference to yourself, Mary, my highest wish is, that you maintain your freedom in Christ. Be not again entangled in the yoke of bondage! Remember your husband's experience in this respect; which — blessed be God! — is my preparation for this season of trial. I *know* that my Redeemer liveth! I *know* that if this earthly house of my tabernacle were dissolved, I have a building of God, eternal in the heavens! The fear of death cannot bring me into bondage!"

"My dear husband," she said, gently kissing his forehead, "have you all the confidence, at this dreadful moment, that you anticipated? Are you unmoved by these trying circumstances of your death?"

"Yes, unmoved. The moment consciousness returned, after receiving my death-wound, I found my heart exulting in God. From that time, O, how near Jesus seems! I repose in his arms! Never before had I such a sense of his presence! Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil! I have neither doubt nor misgiving! Heaven is before me! Its portals are open! The beams of glory, shining through, fall direct on my soul! There is society, there is love, there is friendship; there 'the saints of all ages in harmony meet.' I feel already its peace and its joy! Be this your consolation: you have shared my bosom's history. You know what glory God poured upon me twelve years ago,— glory not to be expressed or comprehended! You know our poverty; what disappointments

came over our worldly prospects, and what trials we have endured! But, amid all, a sweet stream of heavenly consolation has flowed into my heart. Sorrow was a necessary ballast to a bark so wafted by heavenly gales. I have no words of complaint, but all of gratitude, all of praise! The fulness of love is more than an offset for all possible suffering. You, my dear wife, have shared my sufferings and my joys. My dying prayer and request is, that you maintain the beginning of your confidence steadfast unto the end. Do your utmost, also, to transmit the same inheritance to our children, — yea, to all mankind. Then I know we shall soon meet again."

After this long speech, he became convulsed, his mind wandered, and, for a few moments, the struggle seemed to be over with him forever. But he revived, and began to exclaim, in feeble accents,

"Love! — infinite love! — O, what a theme to occupy our eternity! Heaven opens! I stand within its confines! Its bliss floods my soul! Its beams irradiate the dark valley! Blessed Jesus! come! come! O, come quickly, and take me to thyself!"

None present were so placid as himself and the living image of his piety, — his wife. They both seemed literally to stand in the open gate of glory. Her piety was but the engrafting of his own. She had caught the serene life of his faith, and quiet communion with God.

"If you have a word more, speak," said Mr. Holliston, with his finger on his pulse; "for you have but a moment."

Mrs. Littlefield now calmly seated herself under his head and shoulders, putting her arms under his, and clasping his chest, as if anxious that he should die in her arms. The

children kneeled on either side of their dying father. He seemed to want them near his person.

"Yes; a word more to you, my tender babes," he said, alluding to Mr. Holliston's remark. "James, my darling boy, you are the oldest, and I expect you to be a great comfort to your mother. Be obedient to her in all things. Exert yourself to keep our little family together on the homestead. Assist your mother in the family devotions. Watch over your brother and sweet little sister;" the tears again trembling in his eye, at the mention of his little daughter, the youngest.

"I will, dear papa!" sobbed James.

Then, turning to William, the youngest son,—a fine, ruddy boy,—he said, taking him affectionately in his arms,

"William, you must be kind to your mother."

"O, dear, dear papa!" cried the child, "I want to die with you! I *must* die with you! I MUST go to heaven when you do, my dear, dear papa!"

"My precious son," said the dying man, greatly moved by this outburst of childish feeling, "you have God for your father, and you must be willing to live for his sake. You must read your Bible, and love your blessed Saviour; and then you will soon be with papa in heaven."

"I want to die *now*, I *must* die now! I can't live any longer, when papa is gone!" sobbed the child, almost frantic with grief.

"Dear, dear William! you must do as God wills, not as you will. He wills to have you live, to do good, I hope. Never forget what your dying papa said to you, that you must be good and love God." He then kissed him affectionately, and bade him adieu.

Then followed the embrace of little Mary, the most touch-

ing scene of all. He folded her in his arms, pressed her to his heart, and said, lifting his sightless eyes towards heaven, "God of love, this child I leave in thy keeping. O, preserve her from the destroyer!"

From kissing his daughter, he turned to leave this pledge of love on the lips of his wife, when, with that kiss, he breathed out his life, and his spirit was with God.

Mrs. Douglass, who had by this time reached the scene of conflict and of triumph, insisted that the body should be taken to her house for the night, as the sun was already near setting, and Mrs. Littlefield's residence was more distant. This invitation was accepted, and the dead man, with his living family, reached the house just before dark. O, what a scene! What a day of alcoholic doings! The monster had already done enough, one would suppose, in the death of the pastor and in the destructive conflagration, to satisfy his rapacious demands of blood and ruin. What Moloch ever asked more? Alas! no; the work had just begun. Calamities do not come alone, especially those which arise from so prolific a cause. There is no end, no limit, to the woes which this demon of darkness pours out upon society. Were they less, we might relax our demands for an instant discharge of his maddening poisons into the teeming gutters.

The dead body of the pastor had scarcely been decently composed to rest in the parlor, before Mrs. Douglass, having occasion to step to the door, was met by her husband, with an ironwood lever in his hands. He came stalking towards her, drawn up seemingly a foot above his ordinary height, scarcely touching the ground in his wild consciousness of power, with the fire and fury of alcoholic madness flaming in his eye; and, before she could get out of his way, he struck at her head a furious blow, which just grazed her, tearing out

a large tuft of hair and cleaving off a portion of the scalp with it, so that the blood trickled down on her shoulder.

Samuel, hearing her scream, ran to the door, and, unfortunately, was so occupied with his mother's bleeding head, that he seemed not for the moment conscious of the dangerous weapon in his father's hands, and hence received from it a furious blow on the head, which felled him to the earth, dead on the spot. The laboring men and neighbors who were in the house now rushed out, when they, too, were met by the blows of the insane Douglass, which, however, they warded off, and, after a powerful struggle, succeeded in overcoming and confining him in a strait-jacket, which was always kept in readiness for the purpose. Such a scene as ensued no pen can describe. The yells of the alcoholic maniac reëchoed from the contiguous forest, and resounded afar over the now placid surface of the lake. The screams of a sorrowing family over a dead son and brother, the yet unstifled sobs of the Littlefields around another victim, now heightened by this new calamity, the running and tumult of neighbors, and the bleeding but still noble form of Mrs. Douglass, who stood sublimely firm and placid under a sorrow already a hundred times endured in anticipation,— these, these were the dark lines of a picture of which rum's doings in all our large cities are but a counterpart. This good woman felt that she had done all to protect her family that could be done, under the present laws of her state. She had watched over her husband; she had done what she could to keep him from the licensed hells; her life had been an incessant vigil against the gins and traps which legislation had strewn in her path; she had entreated and besought the representatives of law not to deal out the poison to her husband; she had guarded him against those who make a business of holding the cup

to their neighbors' lips; she had watched over her family, by night and day; she had commended them to God in her prayers; and now that one had fallen, and but one, after so many years of deadly peril, seemed to her an event to provoke gratitude with her grief, under the circumstances. There was a moral sublimity in the virtues which she now evinced. She soothed her mourning family, spoke of the easy passage their dear Sammy had had to his home above, how much less he had suffered than their beloved pastor, and how much occasion they had for gratitude that things were no worse.

But the grief of poor Douglass, upon learning the facts, was undefined, unknown, boundless,— utterly beggaring descriptive pen or pencil. It had no alleviations. His nature gave way under it, especially as law now came in, with its penalties, to punish what it had taken no pains to prevent. He was remanded to prison, to be tried as a felon, where grief, mortification and confinement, threw him into a consumption, to release him from a state of society in which he was manifestly unfitted to live. O law! law! how long ere thou wilt cease from thy bloody work, of first instigating crime, and then hanging the criminal?

CHAPTER XXVII.

A LEAP FROM THE SUBLIME TO THE RIDICULOUS.

"These are the works of our God, whereby he would admonish the tyrants of this earth that in the end he will be revenged of their cruelty, what strength soever they make in the contrary."—JOHN KNOX.

THE events of this chapter are nearly simultaneous with those of the former, so that Charles Douglass had left the country before he learned the calamity which had befallen his Mapleton friends.

We ought, ere this, to have apprized the reader that De Lisle was, besides Skampton, the only confidant of the secret step which had been taken with Sarah. Of Mr. Harcourt's motive, in intrusting the matter to him, there can be no doubt. Suffice it to say, he wholly mistook the character and views of that gentleman; for, though decorum forbade his interfering in the matter, he looked upon it with regret and alarm. He had too high an opinion of Miss Harcourt's discretion to believe any such a measure necessary, and too much confidence in her firmness to suppose it would have the least effect to change her heart's affections. That such a person as he deemed her — so discriminating, so pure, so superior to time-serving and sinister interests — should honor a young gentleman with her heart, was of itself sufficient to give him an exalted estimate of his character. Hence, he was not a little curious to make the acquaintance of Douglass, notwithstanding the dubious and dishonorable representations of him which he had received from the father of Sarah.

"Happy, thrice happy man, to have the keeping of a heart so beautiful, so noble in its sentiments!" he would say to himself; and, when he learned from Mr. Harcourt Sarah's change of feeling, he could hardly credit it. He believed her incapable of so sudden a transition, in a matter so delicate, so sacred. "Miss Harcourt," said he, "is not the lady to love so hastily, so injudiciously, as to recall to-morrow the commitment which she had made of herself yesterday." So great was his interest in her character, and so much did he feel the want of her guidance in his conscious spiritual blindness, that a dubious and painful uncertainty oppressed him as to his own condition and the issue of events.

After Charles Douglass' night of anguish under the shady copse of Mr. Harcourt's grounds, he arose and wandered he knew not whither. Though in the midst of living multitudes, they were no more to him than wilderness trees. He was absorbed in his own intense feelings. Gloom and desolateness more total he could not have felt in the heart of a desert. Walking to and fro, he made bold to inquire of such persons as seemed most accessible whether they knew the Harcourt family, in hopes still of eliciting information as to the place of Sarah's concealment. It was some alleviation to be amid scenes familiar to her, and even to pronounce her name to those with whom he met. At length, he fell in with a family whose poverty had commended them to her care, whom she had visited in sickness and distress, and who recollected her as their angelic benefactress.

"O, we were happy when that sweet lady was here," said the good woman. "But, since she is gone, no one feels for us. My man has had a fever. Mary is in decline, poor girl! And we lack the bread for our table. O, that God would send us that sweet angel again, to sympathize in our sorrows!

This, sir, is a cold, cold world!" added the poor woman, beginning to weep.

"Where has Miss Harcourt gone, that you see her no more?" inquired Douglass.

"We cannot tell," said the woman, still weeping; "but they say as how she has a lover here that can."

"A lover!" exclaimed Douglass, with bitter feeling. "Pray what is his name?"

"It is the great, rich Mr. De Lisle, what comes to the minister's house."

"What minister?"

"The king's minister, please your honor."

"Where does the king's minister live?"

"Yonder, in that great house among the trees," said the woman, pointing to the home of Julia.

"And does Mr. Harcourt desire his daughter to marry the man of whom you speak?" said Charles, with a foolish but very natural curiosity to elicit the gossip of the neighborhood.

"Yes, they say as how he wants it very, very much, but our sweet lady will not have him. And that's what for she is gone off. O! O! when will the dear one come back again?"

This story of Sarah's declining the attentions of De Lisle, though a pure fiction, touched a congenial cord in Douglass' heart; and, giving the woman money, he took his departure.

He now called on De Lisle, hoping still to obtain the information he so much desired, and to assure himself of the extent of Sarah's own agency in her mysterious concealment. The consequence was a free and familiar conversation between the two gentlemen. Douglass expatiated on the character of Mr.

Skampton, and expressed the conviction that he was at the bottom of what had happened.

"Very likely," said De Lisle. "I remember to have met the gentleman of whom you speak at Mr. Harcourt's, and I confess things have since appeared there different from what they were before."

"No doubt; he came for no other object but to traduce me in the family. Miss Harcourt was much perplexed on the subject, and particularly at the subsequent effect upon her father."

"I have observed that he has appeared very moody of late."

"And yet, if he has deceived his daughter," said Douglass, "he must be the dupe of some one else; for I have lately received a letter from Miss Harcourt, dated and post-marked in this place, about which he is as much perplexed as I am. And now, sir, for her sake, as well as my own, if you have any light on this subject, I trust you will not withhold it."

"For *her* sake I would willingly give it, if I were not under pledges of honor which make it impossible."

"I cannot ask you to violate your pledges, sir," said Douglass.

"Providence will direct in this matter," said De Lisle. "If you occupy the place in Miss Harcourt's affections which I have reason to suppose, Mr. Douglass, you ought to be a man of faith in Providence. You would hardly be entitled to your good fortune without it, and I much doubt whether you could appreciate your treasure, if you had her."

"It is true," replied Douglass, inwardly rebuking his own criminal distrust of Providence.

"I deem you a man to be envied, even in your present dismay. To have such a heart is in itself the greatest of treasures, and the surest pledge of Heaven's gracious guard-

ianship over you. Think you Miss Harcourt's prayers will avail nothing?"

"Alas! sir, the agony of my loss equals the value of the treasure," replied Douglass, with feelings little prepared to respond to this just reasoning. How hard it is to make the heart coincide with the clearest convictions of the understanding!

"Hope, Mr. Douglass, hope; faith, faith. Is it possible Miss Harcourt's particular friend has not acquired these virtues?"

"If you knew the man, sir, who has taken it upon himself to ruin me, you would better understand the difficulty of faith's work in my case."

"This Skampton must be a masterpiece in his line," replied De Lisle. "Is he a cold-blooded villain?"

"O no; the most conscientious man in the world. But a man conscientiously wicked is more to be dreaded than one who is so against his conscience."

"That is very true," replied De Lisle. "I would help you, Mr. Douglass, if I could. I cannot forfeit my word, to defeat even a conscientious mischief-maker. I sincerely hope the issue may be favorable to the happiness of all concerned, and I will do all I can in honor to make it so. Further than this I cannot speak."

Douglass' depression of spirits increased more and more, daily, till he was disqualified for availing himself of the means for gaining his object which were within his reach. The condition of his own family, and the apprehensions which haunted him in reference to his father's alcoholic madness, made it impossible for him to bear up against this new assault upon his peace. He had not yet heard of the dreadful catastrophe; but there was enough besides to overwhelm him, and, in a fit of desperation, he abruptly embarked for England.

To this he was impelled by the vain hope of diverting his feelings from their fixed channel, and of casting an oblivion upon the past. But, "what exile from himself can flee?" Who can escape "the demon thought"? Can a change of place make an existence endurable which we cannot enjoy? The confusion of a mind, which had lost the power to rally and concentrate its own energies, had more to do with his conduct, at that period, than those impulses which are capable of being analyzed and reduced to the consistency of an intelligent motive. The image of Sarah had so long filled his mind, that its removal disturbed the whole internal machinery, insomuch that the sense to see the objects imprinted upon the eye, to hear sounds that assailed the ear, or to heed the sensible scene around him, however imposing or magnificent, was gone. His foreign travels were little better than a blank, for lack of a place to assign them in his mind.

From the information imparted by Douglass, De Lisle became more and more satisfied of foul play somewhere. He strongly suspected that Mr. Harcourt was the dupe of Skampton, whose character he utterly detested. He saw that Douglass, though a crushed spirit, was replete with generous and noble impulses, that his views of men and things were liberal and enlarged, and he believed him to be the victim of impertinence and cruelty. Hence, he went directly to Mr. Harcourt's, where he learned that that gentleman had left, a day or two previous, without letting a member of the family know where he was going, or when he would return. He found John, the old and tried servant, in doubt and consternation about the fate of his young mistress, whom he loved as he did his own soul. John expressed himself confident that Jim, who had more recently come into the family, was in possession of facts that would unravel the whole mystery.

He said Jim was often giving hints that their young mistress would not return the smiling girl she was when she left home; that, if she got back at all, she might think herself well off; that, if she would only submit to the great one who had her in charge, she might become a mighty queen yet, and much more to the same effect.

Upon being questioned on the subject, however, Jim protested that he was merely joking, and that he knew nothing. But this did not satisfy De Lisle, who saw, from his sinister appearance, what kind of arguments would be likely to have most weight with him, and therefore exposed to view a purse of gold, saying: "The honest truth on this subject, Jim, will be worth to me all that, and more. If you can give it, now is the time to benefit yourself."

Jim felt the attraction more strongly than anything Gilfort had ever offered, inasmuch as the sum was greater. Without hesitation, therefore, he answered, "I cannot longer conceal the truth. My conscience won't let me. My feeling for this family, which is very kind, won't let me."

"Well, Jim, who is the principal actor in Miss Harcourt's removal."

"It is the great land-owner, what's called the prophet."

"What is his name?"

"It is Gilfort. He has a mighty colony in the West, where they do all he says. O, he has heaps of money!"

"But what does Gilfort want of Miss Harcourt?" said De Lisle, who now recollected to have heard of his impostures and great doings in the far West.

"He wants her among his wives," replied Jim.

"Among his wives!" exclaimed De Lisle, with a shudder; "pray, how many wives has he?"

"That's telling," said Jim. "I never counted them. He

believes it 's revealed to him from heaven to take all that pleases him. But he has no queen, and I guess Miss Harcourt will be his queen."

"Is it possible?" said De Lisle, with blank astonishment. "Has Miss Harcourt — the pure, the pious, and the good — been three months in such hands? Pray, Jim, do you know the Marmots, of Wyoming?"

"Yes, sir, — well. Mrs. Marmot is one of the great man's wives. I have attended them in many of their — what 'll you call it? — interviews."

"Jim, you shock me! Where was her husband?"

"O, he,'s as deep in 't as any of them. He, too, believes it 's revealed to do so. He 'd lay down his head, and have it cut off, for the great man."

"Gracious Heaven! is such the family to which this innocent girl has been betrayed? Jim, you must go with me, this day, to Wyoming, to certify these facts, and assist in recovering your mistress."

"No cause of alarm, sir," said Jim. "She 'll be a great lady, anyway. And, besides, they are not in Wyoming."

"Where are they?" inquired De Lisle, still more alarmed.

"To the far West, I s'pose."

"What! do you affirm, Jim, that Gilfort has taken Miss Harcourt to parts unknown, to make her his wife, or concubine, whichever you please?"

"I do; and, for a consideration, I 'll make oath of the same."

"I offer you nothing for your oaths," answered De Lisle, fearing to invalidate his testimony. "I simply inquire for my own gratification, and will do as I promised. How do you know what you affirm?"

"How should I not know it, when I have been for years

at service round the person of the great man, and have caught it all from his lips, on various occasions? It is but six months since I offered myself to this family, by his command."

"Then you have been his spy? Was it you that lately mailed a letter from this place to Mr. Douglass?"

"The very same. A body must have a living, you know. I am a poor one, and has to do the best I can. But I repent the part I have acted," added Jim, who, in truth, had experienced a gradual decline of the mesmerism of Gilfort's influence, or he would never have given the hints that led to these disclosures.

"Where did you get that letter, Jim?"

"It came from the great man, sir, enclosed in one to me."

"Who are joined with Gilfort in this conspiracy? Do you know of any?"

"Yes,— all his servants."

"None in these parts?"

"None that I know of, except a rich man in Riverton. I drove the great man's carriage to his house, last winter, and, it being cold, I occupied the hall, out of which there was an open door to a room where the two consulted the matter, and arranged the whole plan." Here he detailed as much of the conversation as he could recollect, with this difference,— that he left De Lisle to suppose that Skampton was in the secret of Gilfort's designs; and it is probable that Jim thought so himself. The story so coincided with what he knew of Skampton's visit to the Harcourts, that he did not doubt its truth.

"Jim, do you know any other witnesses of these facts?"

"Yes; of the fact that it was the design of Gilfort to make Miss Harcourt his wife I have many witnesses."

De Lisle saw at once that his only course for the recovery

of Miss Harcourt was to take out a writ for conspiracy against both Skampton and Gilfort. He therefore gave several hours to further investigations, and, having thoroughly prepared himself, he set off, in company with an officer, to take Skampton into custody, the only one named in the indictment whose location was certainly known. A gracious Providence seemed to have directed his steps, for they reached Skampton's mansion on the very day of Mr. Harcourt's arrival, and a short time after he had fallen into a state of insensibility. They learned at a neighboring inn that a stranger had just fallen into a fit at Mr. Skampton's; that physicians had been in attendance, and had partially recovered him, though his reason seemed hopelessly gone. Mr. De Lisle, meeting with the principal physician at the inn, inquired of him who this stranger was.

"A Mr. Harcourt, from New York, I think, sir," said the physician.

"What is the cause of this attack?" inquired De Lisle, without intimating any knowledge of the stranger.

"Mental anxiety, I think, aggravated by a too free use of the bottle. I should judge that he has a daughter, to whom some misfortune has happened; for, in his ravings, he is continually alluding to her, with the most terrific and agonized expressions."

"Could not Mr. Skampton inform you whether the man had a daughter in trouble or not?"

"No; the honorable gentleman says he has a daughter, but he knows of no misfortune ever happening to her. He thinks it a mere freak of the man's brain."

"What is the character of this Mr. Skampton?" inquired De Lisle, anxious to learn his standing in his own town.

"He is a great patron, and as good as he is great. Our

town owes more to him than to all the other men in it. He makes it a central point of learning and influence. He is the conservator of the renowned past, and a mighty opponent of our mad innovations, Without him, I am sure I should lose half my business."

"Humph! to be sure; I see," said De Lisle, lost in his own thoughts. "Then this honorable gentleman knows of no misfortune to the daughter of the insane man?"

"None; this he affirmed over and over again."

"Where does he live?"

The physician here gave the direction to the gate, with the porter, and admonitory bell, the ravine and its carriage-way, the terrace and its magnificent array of buildings, overlooked by the observatory, which we have before described as combining in the distinguished man's seat of opulence and of power. De Lisle set off immediately, leaving the sheriff behind, that he might explore the ground before revealing the nature of his business. When he reached the mansion, he found poor Harcourt raving mad, crying, "Sarah! Sarah! Sarah!" as loud as he could scream. "Come to me, dear, precious daughter! Hands off! — thieves, villains, seducers, cut-throats! — touch her, and I'll be the death of you!" De Lisle tried to command his attention, but to no purpose. He continued to rave, in the most piteous manner, over his darling daughter. Turning to Skampton, who did not recognize his visitor, having seen him but a moment the previous winter, De Lisle said,

"Can you give no information concerning this man's daughter?"

"I — I — I give information? how should I be able to give information? I know nothing of her," said Skampton, in a flurried and agitated manner, from a vague idea that it

might be somebody that had a right to demand. A guilty conscience needs no accusers.

"Sir, in the name of humanity I demand the place of Miss Harcourt's concealment!" said De Lisle, with an imperious air, which he knew full well how to assume.

"Miss Harcourt's concealment! is Miss Harcourt concealed?" replied Skampton, perfectly thunder-struck. "How should I know the place of her concealment?"

"Think not to put me off in this way," said De Lisle, in a decisive tone. "Restore her to her father, or answer it at the tribunal of your country. It can be proved, by competent witnesses, that *you* contrived and instigated this nefarious plot for the ruin of an innocent and accomplished young lady. *You* made this miserable father believe that the ruin of his daughter was certain, if he did not remove her. *You* suggested Wyoming as the place of her concealment. *You* contrived the plan to decoy her thither. *You* made yourself responsible for the good conduct of the Marmots, whom you knew to be as black in character as infamy could make them. *You*, to accomplish your dark purposes of conspiracy and seduction, have coolly, deliberately, and under the cloak of religion and duty, conspired against the peace and virtue of an unsuspecting family. Sir, we can have no quibbles here! Nothing but the restoration — untouched, unharmed — of this abused and insulted young lady can divert from your hoary head the gathering storm. Sir, I demand the place of her concealment!"

"O, God! witness to my innocence!" said Skampton, trembling in every fibre.

"Talk not of innocence, you perjured hypocrite! Look upon this wreck which your infamous stratagem has made of a doting father and a distinguished citizen! Call not that

innocence which has robbed him of the choicest jewel of a father's heart, which has bleached his locks more than the frosts of fifty winters, and has broken up the happiest of family unions!"

"I do protest I have acted in good faith. I know no more of Miss Harcourt's concealment than you do. It was at the suggestion of another that I advised her removal to Wyoming, and I did it because I thought it a service to the family."

"Yes; you did it because you wished to aid your accomplice in his work of seduction. To convince you that I have the facts in the case, I now assure you that both this infamous Gilfort and yourself are under indictment for conspiring against the liberty and virtue of an unsuspecting victim; and I swear, by the God whose our breath is, that, while a drop of blood beats in my veins, neither of you shall go unwhipped of justice!"

"What! my worthy friend, Samuel Gilfort?" gasped Skampton, almost suffocated with terror and amazement.

"A devil incarnate! There is nothing too bad for your friend to do. Where is the wretch?" said De Lisle, with vehemence.

"Sir, you abuse a worthy man. He is in the West, aiding the cause of the poor colonists."

"He is teaching somebody to serve the devil, as he taught you."

"Do you mean to insult me?" said Skampton, who was taken with a sudden fit of personal dignity.

"It is useless to parley," replied De Lisle; "the law makes you responsible, and I will hold you to it. I shall find means of bringing you to your senses."

De Lisle went out, and soon returned, with the sheriff,

who placed the great conservator under arrest; and from that moment all his courage, magnanimity and distinguished qualities, forsook him, and he sunk into his native littleness. The report flew like wildfire, that the renowned Mr. Skampton was under arrest for conspiring to rob a young lady of her freedom and her virtue,— beautiful, too, she was said to be, and that her father had gone mad with grief and mortification. Dark surmises lingered in men's minds, and the thousand-and-one hangers on, whom, in his better days, he would not put among the dogs of his flock, were now forward to charge upon him the most flagrant misdemeanors. All protested that they had for years been expecting his fall. The flatterers, whose poisoned words had inflamed his vanity and converted him from a little to a great man, and had thus contributed to his downfall, were the first to declare that they never had any opinion of his abilities or his virtues. Saphead said he never had any opinion of him, and now went through the country to pull down Skampton and prop up the anti-temperance movement. He feared both might perish together. The proof against Skampton was so conclusive that the court laid him under heavy bonds for his appearance at his trial. But by this time Skampton's creditors got wind of how things were going with him, and pounced upon what he had, to secure their debts. He was found to be immensely extended; and, at a forced sale, it was feared that his estate would not pay fifty cents on a dollar. All he had was put under attachment.

Unable to secure himself, he now applied to his friends; but, sad to relate, with all his enormous purchases of influence and friendship, he found himself as completely bankrupt here as in money. Not a man came to his relief,— no, not one. Diddington College passed a resolve rescinding his doc-

torate of laws, because its friends thought it would injure their institution to have the name of such a man on its lists. Dr. Treadmill, who had by this time married rich, and was one of the most opulent men in the country, was waited on by Mrs. Skampton, and entreated, with tears in her eyes, that he would go security to save her husband from prison. Treadmill trembled, fluttered, rubbed his hands, snapped his eyes, had a sudden fit of palpitation, and, to his great grief, was compelled to decline the honor. Nothing but imprisonment was left to the afflicted, fallen Skampton, and to prison he went.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A DIVINE RIGHT TO DO WRONG.

"But then I sigh, and, with a piece of scripture,
Tell them that God bids us do good for evil;
And thus I clothe my naked villany
With old odd ends, stolen forth of Holy Writ."

SHAKSPEARE.

TENDER thoughts cluster round that home where the daughter is merged in the wife. The light-hearted girl goes out to return only as visitor and mistress of another domestic polity. Unbidden tears testify to the pangs of separation, even though all are agreeable and consenting. The departing one turns away her face to weep over her buried girlhood, and the sundered ties of her youthful home. "I am to repose no more in the paternal arms. I am a girl no longer. A new and untried path is before me. Indulgent Providence, guide my inexperience, instruct my ignorance, bless the dear

ones whom I leave behind," she says, and smiles through her tears on the happy possessor of her heart and her hand.

"Dear daughter, you will write, will you not? Write soon, darling, very soon."

"Dear sister, come back,— do, do! We shall be so lonesome! Remember how much we all love you."

"O, yes; I will always be a daughter, a sister. You will all be to me what you have been, and more. Yes, you too must write. You must come and see me. O, how glad it will make me! The very dog from my girlhood's home will be welcome."

This is nature. The fruit, with a shock, leaves its parent stem,— the young, by constraint, its dam. But, if such be the feeling where all is favorable, how much more painful where all is adverse! The father saying, with bitter feelings, "My child is ruined! I did what I could to save her, but all in vain!" The mother, weeping in secret over the lost image of herself, beseeches her God to protect and restore the wanderer. Brothers and sisters, in sad discourse about the dreadful calamity which has befallen them, find no hope, no consolation.

These are touching scenes, but less aggravating than in the case of Miss Harcourt. She was led by parental hands into the jaws of the destroyer, like children into the burning furnace of Moloch. Better give her to the flames than to a *religious* debauchee. Strange combination of words, yet true in all time,— our own as well, if we are allowed to apply the term religion to such shocking perversions. Society has its wild beasts, harpies, argus-eyed monsters, many-headed dragons,— men lurking in secret to ensnare and destroy, who are far more to be dreaded than those fabulous animals on which ancient prowess expended its force. Such men subsist

upon the ruin of families, crushed spirits, blighted hopes, parental despair, and household degradation. O, God! where sleeps thy thunder, that it falls not on these despoilers of thy fair creation? It was the alcoholic sorceress that had done the deed. She had bewitched Gilfort by hereditary influence and actual possession. She had turned Skampton's conservative brain towards the protection of her own nefarious traffic. She had placed Charles Douglass under the ban of a drunkard's son. She had corrupted the heart and perverted the reason of Harcourt. No effect was ever more plainly traceable to its cause, than all these evils are to that bane of virtue, health, character, property, domestic peace, and national prosperity — alcohol.

Sarah Harcourt was now the victim of this embodied sorceress. Gilfort was infinitely worse than an ordinary seducer. He had deluded himself, and his victims too, into the horrible feeling that religion lent them its sanction. Had Sarah known her condition, how easy would have been her escape! But she was in ignorance, her father deceived, and even Skampton himself was unconsciously acting as the pimp and pander of the basest of men.

"My dear Blandy!" said Mrs. Marmot, "do excuse my substituting that name for Sarah. It is so sweet to associate you with my dear departed one! *My* Blandy, husband finds it necessary to take —— city in his way westward, and I hope you will feel a pleasure in visiting so renowned a place. Our first colonists landed in those parts."

"It will be a pleasure for me to do so," said Sarah. "I have leisure. I have no desire to hasten our journey."

"Yes, love, we will travel so far by private conveyance, to enjoy the country scenery, and thence we will make our way by railroad and steamboat."

Great preparations were made for this journey. Two grooms were selected from the establishment to accompany them in a coach and four, richly caparisoned, not at all in keeping with republican simplicity. The wire-pullers behind the scene evidently meant to make a great impression, as if such a mind as that of Miss Harcourt could be vanquished by glitter and gewgaw. None are so puerile and contemptible, in dealing with a woman of real merit, as those who have spent their lives among the mere apologies of womanhood. They passed leisurely through the country, seeking in their way whatever was sublime, beautiful or picturesque in scenery, or pleasant in rustic life. Miss Harcourt enjoyed it much. While they were in the heart of what is called the Beech Woods, Sarah remarked that it reminded her of the forests in Mapleton, which were equally dense and profound.

"Mapleton!" said Mrs. Marmot; "did you ever know Mapleton?"

"I lived there a short time, when I was a child."

"Then you must have heard of our great colonial leader in the West?"

"What, Samuel Gilfort?"

"The same,— the most distinguished man in the valley of the Mississippi."

"He is a dreadful creature!" replied Sarah, with a shudder.

"Indeed, Miss Harcourt," said Mr. Marmot, "do you think so?"

"My dear Blandy," said Mrs. Marmot, "the best men are often most maligned."

"And the worst men pass for the greatest saints," replied Sarah.

"No doubt, no doubt," said Marmot, waiving the subject.

"The lake view, I believe, is one of the charms of Mapleton."

"Yes, it is very pretty," replied Sarah; and then they passed to subjects in general.

The object of this conversation was to sound Miss Harcourt as to the possibility of having Gilfort join them in the journey, who was all this time so near as to have daily communication with the Marmots. They had become the perfect dupes of his pleasure. It is impossible to conceive of one mind so completely occupying the place of another. What is it? Mesmerism? — witchcraft? Col. Stone's book on Mathias, the impostor, details facts on this subject too astounding to be believed, except on evidence not to be doubted. That very evening the Marmots saw Gilfort, when the latter inquired, "How lies the land? Can I join you?"

"By no means, venerated father," said Marmot, giving him the title common to Gilfort's dupes. "Conversion is a slow process, even with the most convincing evidence. Your presence will drive the bird from its cage."

"My blood boiled to hear her abuse your sacred person," said Mrs. Marmot.

"Never mind. Treat her kindly. I'll meet you in the heart of the great prairie, where there is no danger of an escape."

Accordingly, Gilfort left the next morning, and went with all speed to his seat in Missouri.

Leaving Miss Harcourt to her journey, we will follow Gilfort to his home. We will sketch the principles of his colonial power, or the nature of the tree into which his initiated were engrafted. Unfortunately, it was a tree that reversed the ordinary law, the stock, and not the scion, determining

the character of the fruit. The cardinal principle was that of England's king:

> "And thus I clothe my naked villany
> With old odd ends, stolen forth of Holy Writ."

Gilfort, unlike Richard the Third, really thought himself invested with scriptural authority to do as he did. He had derived this perversion from the fountain that supplied his his blood. He had nourished it with wine. It was part and parcel of his being. His speech before his chosen leaders, on this his return among them, lets out the heart of the man.

"I cannot too highly commend," he said, "the zeal and faithfulness with which you have managed our colonial interests during my absence. This colony is yet in its infancy; but I foresee that it will grow till it absorbs all others, and rules the nations. Our principles entitle us to this destiny, and are a pledge that we shall enjoy it. The other nations are to us what the Canaanites were to Israel,—a prey, a booty, which we are at liberty to appropriate by any means in our power. Joshua, David, Elijah, and all the heads of Israel, used stratagem with their enemies, and we must do the same with ours. Their riches are our riches; their houses our houses; their pleasures our pleasures; their wives our wives. We are the sons of God, to whom are given the daughters of men, that we may choose wives among them according to the desire of our eyes. They are doomed, and we are not required to observe faith in our dealings with them. Was Jacob precise as to his mode of appropriating the flocks of the Syrian? Did not Simeon and Levi first weaken their enemies by a pious fraud, and then put them to the sword? Did not Samuel hew down Agag before the Lord? These

things are our examples in dealing with the Gentiles of our own age.

"We must treat them as God treats them. He has made them a curse, and we must make them a prey. Stratagem is our policy. If temporizing will give us the greater advantage over them, we will temporize; if cutting them down, root and branch, serves our purpose better, we will cut them down. This is the course to which we are beckoned by the lights of example."

Think not, reader, that this is an improbable story. The Jesuits, from the beginning, have acted on the same principles. Of all parties and organizations, those which assume to be the special favorites of heaven, to whom all other parties and organizations are given as a prey, to be dealt with as Israel were required by a special dispensation to deal with a doomed race of old, are the most dangerous, demoralizing, and destructive. They claim a divine right to repress the sentiments of humanity, to disregard truth and justice, and to act against the freedom of the world. Of precisely the same character are attempts to justify any specific wrong by the Bible,—such as slavery, despotism, and the liquor traffic, and drinking customs of society. Do the Scriptures convert wrong into right, falsehood into truth, vice into virtue, and make over natural injustice into justice, by a special dispensation? Is the Bible given to stultify reason and conscience? Is it to preserve forever unstanched the blood of war? Is it to render the chains of the slave eternal? Did Christ set Heaven's imprint to the alcoholic trade and usages, by converting water into wine? Will Christian men write books and preach sermons prostituting revealed religion to purposes so base, so abhorrent to humanity?

O, ye scribes of the people! I warn you to beware of sport-

ing with heaven's thunder! Touch not the ark of God with polluted hands! Involve not eternal truth with your temporary questions and perishable interests! Seek not asylum for the world's corruptions in the sanctuary of the Most High! If what you assume were true,—which, thank God, it is not!—that the Bible tolerates wrong and oppression, then humanity will sweep it away, with the Koran, Shasters, Zendavesta, and all those ancient charters under which error and wickedness have so long intrenched themselves. If it were indeed a charter to protect and perpetuate hoary abuses, then, perish its pages, perish its priests, perish its prophets, perish its principles, perish its precepts, perish its church, its litany, and its ritual! Your reasoning cannot save it. It ought not to save it. It is not worth saving. Nothing is worth saving which arrays itself against humanity, against freedom, against virtue, against God. I beseech you to take warning by the Gilfortites and the Jesuits, not to prop up the liquor traffic, slavery, the drinking usages, or any existing abuse, by an appeal to the Word of God. The same Intelligence speaks in revelation as in nature, nor does he affirm in the one what he denies in the other.

Gifort found, on his return, that Bludgeon's emigrant host had pitched not many miles distant. Full of mischief against one by whom he had been so severely rebuked, he sent a man with a cask of whiskey into his camp, to try the strength of its temperance principles. Accordingly, the man posted himself under an awning, in a convenient position for his trade, and began to expose the seductive commodity in the market. Under ordinary circumstances, the bait would not have taken; but now, afflicted with disease, as the emigrants were, by a change of water, fatigued by a long journey and its many privations, and prostrated by the relaxing heat of a bilious

atmosphere, they deemed it prudent to buy a little as medicine, which even their temperance pledge allowed.

But not a few of them were reformed drunkards, and could not use the article at all without abusing it. Consequently, when Bludgeon arrived, who had not yet joined them, he found, to his mortification, that his forlorn hope of total abstinence were convulsed with riot and drunkenness. Moses descending from the mount to witness the idolatry of the golden calf could scarcely have felt intenser indignation. His blood boiled, his chest heaved, and he felt, for once, a despair of the efficacy of his own principles. But he restrained the expression of his feelings. He soon learned where the serpent lay concealed, as he had divined beforehand the den from which he had emerged, knowing their contiguity to Gilfort's colony. He went quietly to the whiskey-factor's awning, and said, "What do you ask for a pint of that medicine?"

"A phip," said the man.

"A phip!" replied Bludgeon; "that 's dirt cheap. I'd thought it would be a bit, in this distant country."

"No, we have n't far to bring it; we can afford it cheap," said the man.

"Eh, I see," said Bludgeon; and, seizing an axe, he dealt a furious blow ot the barrel-head, when out rushed the imprisoned enemy, and sunk into the prairie mould, without the hope of a resurrection.

"There you have a market for all at once," he added. "Now, go and tell your master to send all he has, and we 'll buy it up in the same way!"

The fellow, looking round, prepared to pitch in upon the assailant of his merchandise; but, seeing Bludgeon's bony battery standing in an attitude of defiance, his caution predominated, and he made his escape.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MISS HARCOURT'S ADVENTURES.

"Be what thou wilt, thou art my prisoner.
O, fairest beauty, do not fear, nor fly!
For I will touch thee but with reverent hands,
And lay them gently on thy tender side."—SHAKSPEARE.

MISS HARCOURT had by this time become a subject of general interest and notoriety. The world was full of curiosity concerning a young lady whose fate involved the fall of a man of Mr. Skampton's position, the possession of whose person had been an object of so much scheming with the great colonial dignitary of the West, whose loss had driven an opulent father to madness, a noble lover into foreign countries, and for whom so many men of eminence were ready to jeopard property and life.

After the conversation upon Gilfort, noticed in the foregoing chapter, Miss Harcourt heard not a disagreeable sentiment in all the early part of her journey, but everything to entertain and delight her. Their city sight-seeing was as pleasant as it was improving. Acting by the supposed order of her father, whom she expected to meet in a few days, no suspicion of the snare into which she had fallen crossed her mind. She was peaceful, buoyant, happy,—happy both in herself and in the confidence of her personal associates. Indeed, they were everything to her that friendship could demand; bland, gracious, prompt to anticipate her every want, and seemingly congenial sharers in her sentiments of

piety and devotion. Their route, after leaving the city, was not direct, but circuitous; the avowed object of which was to afford her a view of all that was rare and extraordinary in the country through which they were passing. Whatever was enchanting in scenery, sublime and awful in precipice and cascade, beautiful in the green expanse of ocean prairies dotted with forest islands to diversify and relieve the view,—yea, whatever was delightful in cultivated or uncultivated nature,— was spread out before her, to entertain, amuse, and occupy her thoughts. Their plan seemed to be to bury the past in the present, and with new scenes to open upon their ward new hopes and aspirations, to make her a more pliant and obsequious acquisition to him who hoped to rule her destiny. Vain, delusive expectation! Those who live to eat, drink and enjoy, may be thus disposed of; but not the devotees of right, not the heirs of high-born faith and duty.

"You see," said Mrs. Marmot to Sarah, as they approached the end of their journey, "how magnificent are nature's works. How unlike the meagre productions of art! How little you who confine yourselves to cities know of the riches, splendor and magnificence, of the world we inhabit!"

"You are aware that I am not of this kind. I am a plant of the country. I always loved the country," said Sarah.

"Ah, yes; but not as I do," said Mrs. Marmot, with something unusual in her manner, that surprised Sarah. "Would that I could transfer my vision to you, and then you would enjoy the country as I do."

"Wherein is your vision different from mine? Are not the hues of light the same to both? Are flowers more blooming to the one than the other? Do not the sights, sounds, odors, clouds, vapors, trees, birds, grass and all visible things, alike invite the admiration of every beholder?"

"No, Sarah. Even you must confess that cultivated minds see in them charms which are not revealed to the uncultivated."

"True, cultivation is necessary to enjoy nature; and no doubt some are constitutionally more susceptible to its impressions than others. Do you mean more than this?" inquired Sarah, still impressed that some unexplained mystery lurked in the words of her friend.

"I suppose you confess to seeing a divinity in these things," said Mrs. Marmot, warily opening her own fanatical ideas upon one whom she was anxious to indoctrinate into the same.

"Certainly. The Lord made the heavens and the earth; and he leaves not himself without witness, in that he does good, and gives rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. The Bible teaches us this, and nature teaches the same. But still, a spiritual mind is alone competent to feel and enjoy it."

"Precisely so; a spiritual mind is alone capable of seeing a spiritual God. But you know the young prophet saw more than this, when Elisha prayed that his eyes might be opened. He saw the mountains full of chariots and horses of fire. Now, this is what I see, Sarah. All things around me teem with living, angelic beings. O, how beautiful! — how beautiful! I see them now moving to and fro like the dancing sunbeams, like the leaping lightning. I hear them, I hear them! O, how transporting! It is heavenly music!" And, during the saying of this, the action, expression and intonation of Mrs. Marmot were an exact reflection of what she uttered, as if it was all as real as the prairie scenery.

Sarah was confounded, and thought it a mere pantomime to amuse her; or, doubting what to think, she said,

"O, Mrs. Marmot, you are joking! You want to put my credulity to the test. You need not think me so easily duped."

"Joking? Do you think I could joke on a subject like this? I am all the time seeing these angelic beings. I talk with them, and they talk with me. I can get answers from them at any time. I am a medium. I see them at morning and evening, reposing on their rosy pillows of cloud and vapor. O, how beautiful! — how beautiful! They dance in the ambient air. They leap from cloud to cloud. They sport in ether. O, Sarah, that you could see what I see, hear what I hear, feel what I feel!"

"Pray, Mrs. Marmot, who taught you all this? Let me know, and I will take lessons of him."

"Will you?" said Mrs. Marmot, who felt that she had reached the point, and got the pledge she desired. "I will tell you. If you will lay aside your prejudices, and take lessons, I can assure you it will not be a week before you will enjoy these glorious sights and sounds."

"Call in your teacher, then. I am ready for the first lesson," said Sarah, smiling.

"No, not till we get to Sylvan Creek."

"Does my teacher live at Sylvan Creek?"

"That is one of his homes."

"What is his name?"

"O, the wicked call him Samuel Gilfort, but I call ——"

"Horrible! Do you speak of that vile man?" exclaimed Sarah, perfectly thunderstruck.

"Sarah, Sarah, stop! You know not what you are saying. I would not call him so for all the world. He has taught me more about spiritual beings than all other men."

"You do not know that man," said Sarah, in great con-

sternation at the mania of confidence with which Mrs. Marmot spoke of Gilfort. "I know well where he spent his youth; and his character was as bad as fraud, and vice, and strong drink, could make it."

"Those are slanders,—pure, malicious slanders, Sarah. You do not know him, but will now have an opportunity to correct your mistake."

"What! by Gilfort's acquaintance? No, never! never!" said Sarah, positively.

She had scarcely done speaking, when Gilfort rode up, with a troop of attendants, and horses gorgeously caparisoned. Mrs. Marmot exclaimed, in ecstasy, "Here he comes!—here he comes!"

Sarah turned deadly pale, as her real condition, in the power of Gilfort, now took possession of her mind. "O!" said she to herself, "my presentiments!—my presentiments! How sadly, too sadly, are they realized! My father! my father! can it be you are in the secret of all this? My head is giddy. My heart is faint. God of love, hold up thy sinking child! On thy promised protection I lean."

By the time these ejaculations had passed through her mind, she had so far rallied her sinking spirits as to escape fainting, which she dreadfully feared. That her person should thus fall, without the power of resistance, into such hands, seemed to her worse than a hundred deaths. Gilfort approached, and reached out his hand to her with an air of extreme gallantry, which brought the timid blood again to her cheeks, and she stood in all the strength of her womanly scorn and resistance. Holding her hands firm by her side, she said,

"Sir, what have I to do with you?"

"To do with me, Miss Harcourt?" rejoined Gilfort, with

a patronizing and gracious air. "Cannot old friends exchange greeting, after so long an absence?"

"I never acknowledged you as a friend, sir, and I never will."

"You will change your mind, Miss Harcourt, when you know me. I have been slandered. You have heard all these evil stories. I cannot blame you. But, Miss Harcourt, you may yet learn how deeply I have been injured. I am entirely another being from what you think me to be."

"Then rejoice in the consciousness. I have no interest to know it. I know enough of you already. If you think, by decoying me into this distant country, to cultivate my acquaintance, you will find yourself mistaken. I will die first!"

"Shall I smite the Philistine?" said one of Gilfort's overzealous followers, drawing his sword.

"Yes, let him smite," said Sarah. "He will see that I have the courage to die, before admitting such a man to my acquaintance. The God who gave me my being will take it to himself, ere he will suffer it to feel the contamination of such influence."

A frown from Gilfort was sufficient to hasten the fellow's sword into its scabbard again, and to send him in confusion behind the scene.

"My dear Sarah, how can you repel such condescension?" said Mrs. Marmot.

Nervous or mental illusions are far more common than the sober, orderly portion of the community are willing to believe. Though our story comes far short of the facts daily told of spiritual rappings and intercourse with the dead, or of kindred manifestations in every age, yet it must to many appear improbable. Fiction on this subject, to chal-

lenge belief, must stop short of fact. To account for these phenomena may be difficult. That there is a real power in mesmerism over the nervous system, and also to produce mental illusions, it is now generally conceded. Some, of course, are more susceptible than others, and the manifestations are in no two cases perhaps exactly alike. But still there are lines of resemblance throughout. Alcohol is another and still more powerful agent in generating mental illusions. In the earlier stages, it raises pleasing fancies in the mind,— of riches, splendor, luxury, power, angelic loveliness, and superhuman grandeur. But, as the disease progresses, these are turned into deformities, devils, wasps, spiders, and the most horrible monsters, investing the patient, as in a case of delirium tremens. All these nervous disturbances affecting the mind, whether leading to profanity or to prayer, to the intercourse of angels or devils, fall under the same category. In the case of Gilfort, mesmerism, alcohol, education, habit, constitution and favoring circumstances, all united to cast his own mental illusions into a fixed and most unique form; and, being united with great shrewdness and concentration, he had the power of casting other minds, of a given constitution, into the same form, and thus of generating a new spiritual disease, and a new school of patients to propagate the infection among men. Mrs. Marmot, and her husband with her, were dupes, and doubtless perfectly sincere. In the deception practised with Miss Harcourt, they simply carried out the will of another, which to them had become the supreme law of right and wrong.

The scene just described took place in the open prairie, on the day of their arrival at Sylvan Creek. They had stopped to refresh; and, after they had done so, they took up their line of march, bearing due west, being conducted by Gilfort

and his company for some distance. Miss Harcourt, in a state of mind better imagined than described, mechanically moved forward with them, because no alternative was left her. She was happy, at length, to be relieved of Gilfort's presence, by his bearing off diagonally to the south-west, and soon disappearing. He left Sarah and the Marmots an ample supply of servants for their new establishment. It proved to be a neat and elegantly furnished Swiss cottage, situated in the shade of a small wood, which stood like an island in the midst of a green meadow-sea.

Miss Harcourt was too much fatigued to take much notice of the place, and too much agitated in mind to be interested in anything about her. She saw she was among fanatics and madmen, who were deaf to the voice of reason and the pleadings of humanity. The mask was now thrown off, because they found no further occasion for wearing it. Their wine potations were deep and frequent, and they were all the time under its disguising influence. It was a home of mesmeric, alcoholic insanity. Sarah repaired at once to the room assigned her, to seek the repose she felt she needed, but which her anomalous position did not permit her at once to enjoy.

She queried with herself, "Can it be possible that my father knew the kind of people to whom he committed me? Did he mistrust their obsequiousness to Gilfort? No, no! he knew the vileness of that man as well as I. He is incapable of so base an act. Did he know my present situation, he would be driven to madness. O, my Father in heaven, the trial of trials has come! — come in the form least expected, least prepared for, least endurable,— in this wilderness country, more than a thousand miles from my natural protectors, among those whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword; whose fanaticism is an un-

fathomable gulf, that swallows up faith, sincerity, honor, every kindly sympathy and every virtuous sentiment, and whose intemperance makes them demons! My head is giddy; my heart aches; I sink,— I die!" And, throwing herself on a sofa, she remained for some time in a condition of dreamy horror, of which she could give no exact account.

Her nature, having exhausted its sensations of woe, gradually recovered its tone, and she began to take more just views of her condition. She reflected that, whatever wrong had been done, she was guiltless, and it became her, as a Christian woman, to commit herself to a covenant-keeping God, the same as to a sickness, or any other misfortune. The Providence that had brought the trial had his own modes of deliverance. To rail and embitter her feelings against the wicked instruments of her suffering, instead of mitigating, increased its poignancy. Considerations like these occurred, but not with entire relief, because she was haunted with tormenting fears for the future. It was not the fear of poverty, disease or death, but the more terrible evil of personal insult. She was in the power of one who, to her view, was the incarnation of evil, fraud, fanaticism, rapine, violence and murder; and the difficulties investing her seemed a turbulent sea, without a bottom or a shore. Wild and dreadful conjectures as to what might befall her tortured her imagination with ideas more tormenting than the reality of death itself.

To whom could she appeal, but to Infinite, to Parental Love? To a late hour of the night she continued this appeal. "Faith, faith!" she said, "shall I preach faith and not practise it? Ah, the hour of trial proves the strength of a principle! Shall I fail in the ordeal? Are not my Father's promises sure? Are they not equal to any crisis? Lord, I believe,—help thou my unbelief!"

Nor were thoughts and devotions like these without their effect. Her heart again dilated with hope. "Victory, victory! my victory is in my faith. Lord, the assurance that thou wilt be with me is all I ask. Thy presence is hope in despair, joy in grief, happiness in death." She came to feel it a mere point of difference whether she were in one place or another, among friends or foes, in comfort or discomfort, so that God filled and overwhelmed her with a sense of his presence. In this state of mind she laid down, and slept sweetly till morning. And, upon awaking, her first aspiration was, "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O, God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand! When I awake, I am still with thee."

It was yet early. She walked out to contemplate the scenery of her prison. She extended her walk quite round the wood in which the cottage was built, and could see nothing in any direction but a boundless sea of waving grass. The wood was full of birds, as if all the feathered songsters, to which the surrounding prairie furnished subsistence, had congregated there for the convenience of nests and roosts, so that their infinitely variegated notes floated in the breezes, and sent up to heaven the sweet warblings of their bird-song. It was such a scene as she had never contemplated. Its sublimity, beauty, joyousness, were unspeakable, unknown.

To add to the enchantment of the place, a lovely little brook, unlike any she had seen in the prairie country, because it was limpid, pellucid and babbling flowed, at her feet. Its movement was brisk, affording an ample supply of delicious water, which here reposed in little ponds fit for bathing; there rippling and wandering among the smooth stones, it exposed its beauties to view; while there again, it modestly

concealed itself in the tall prairie grass. Sarah yielded to the adoring outburst of her feelings, exclaiming, "This is truth, this is nature; it cannot deceive; it is God's handiwork-manship; it is a relic of Eden; it is pencilled by infinite love! The sight of it is worth all my troubles, all my fears!"

Sarah returned to her room and locked it, resolved to have no intercourse with a family who had shown themselves so utterly base and unworthy of her confidence. At the hour of breakfast, Mrs. Marmot knocked at the door, but Sarah refused to open it.

"My dear child," said Mrs. Marmot, tenderly, "you must have your breakfast. You will make yourself sick. You must have refreshment, after so long a journey."

"The loss of my breakfast, Madam, is a trifling cause of sickness, compared with the loss of my liberty."

"My dear Sarah, can you say you have lost your liberty? Have we not left you free as air at every step you have taken?"

"It was the liberty of deceit, Madam; the liberty of a bird decoyed into a snare. You are guilty of abduction, and now hold me as your prisoner. It is useless for you to plead innocence. If you think a breakfast so necessary to my health, bring it here. I shall not breakfast out of my room."

Mrs. Marmot left, therefore, and soon returned with her husband, bringing her breakfast.

"I understand, Miss Harcourt, that you charge us with your abduction," said Mr. Marmot.

"I do! You have brought me here stealthily, knowing I would not come, if I understood the circumstances."

"We have done nothing without your father's order."

"That cannot be! My father would never intentionally deal with me thus."

"My dear," said Marmot to his wife, "bring Mr. Harcourt's letters."

The letters were brought, and now, for the first time, Sarah learned the object her father had in view in taking her to Wyoming. The agency of Skampton in the business was also revealed. As to that of Gilfort she was left to conjecture, though she did not doubt it. She was perfectly thunderstruck, especially at the part her father had acted.

"You see," said Mr. Marmot, "that I stipulated with your father for the entire control of your person. And here he concedes it," reading the following from one of the letters: "From the high character I have received of you, I have no hesitation in conceding to you, for the time being, the entire control of my daughter's person, as that seems a necessary condition to the cure of her malady."

"That must be a forgery, like my letters from Terracegreen!" said Sarah, who had examined and satisfied herself that the letters purporting to come from her father at that place were spurious.

"How can you affirm that?" said Mrs. Marmot. "Examine the letter, and you will find every mark about it in your father's own peculiar style." Sarah did so, and was forced to believe that it was genuine.

"But those from Terracegreen are certainly forgeries."

"That suspicion of yours, Miss. Harcourt, must be erroneous," said Marmot, examining the letters. "They were written by the same hand that wrote the others."

"Then my father will be here soon, according to his promise?"

"Yes, unless he wishes longer to detain you here. He has a high opinion of the colony and its leader."

"You are certainly deceived as to my father's feelings on

that subject. I have heard him express a contrary opinion, over and over again."

"Well, he ought to have," said Mrs. Marmot, earnestly.

"I do not wish to dispute with you on any of these points," said Sarah. "Admitting all you say to be true, I am of age, and my father has no right to dispose of my person in this way. I implore you, Mr. Marmot, by the honor of a gentleman, to conduct me home."

"But he has a right to influence your choice of a husband."

"No, not by such means. Besides, it is impossible for him to succeed in this way. I am now more fixed than ever. And, whatever be your views concerning me, I feel it my duty to say, at once, you will be disappointed. I will die before I violate my own heart's dictates. If you keep me here an age, you will find yourself no nearer your object. Deceive not yourself." This she said to Marmot alone, hoping that he might be somewhat less insane than his wife.

"I have no control in this matter. I only obey the powers that be, which you know we are commanded to do."

"And a righteous power it is," said Mrs. Marmot, devoutly.

"What! you apply this language to that wicked Gilfort!" said Sarah, with a shudder. "How can persons of your sense fail to see the absurdity of calling this treatment of me a righteous act? Is a fraud righteous? Is lying righteous? You deceived me in the motives for taking this journey. It has been throughout a system of falsehood. And now you hold me here against my will, and call it righteous. Woe to them that call evil good!"

"What standard have we of right and wrong, but the will of God?" said Marmot. "Does that deserve the name of

fraud and lying which He commands? Was it fraud in Israel to borrow the ornaments of the Egyptians?"

"Do you undertake to say you have a special dispensation from heaven to treat me thus? If so, my opinion of you is lower than ever, and your influence over me is gone. I wish to hear no more."

Still their attention to her was unremitted. They never contradicted her in anything. This was Gilfort's order. He was aware by this time of her father's hopeless insanity, and of Douglass' escape to foreign parts, and he felt that nothing now remained but to subdue her by kindness. Of his success in this he had not a doubt. He judged of her by those who had fallen under his influence, and herein was his mistake. Sarah saw that a boundless prairie and the danger of making her way through a new and unknown country were the least of the difficulties that environed her. She was fenced around by fraud, sanctified by fanaticism, and inflamed by alcohol. She was held by a power which knew no law but its own impulses, no conscience but its own will, and no discrimination as to the means for accomplishing its purposes but what regarded the simple question of success.

Yea, what was most of all surprising was the fact testified to by Jim, of Gilfort's influence over the husband, as well as the wife, who now held Miss Harcourt in durance vile. It was a conjugal confidence unbroken by infidelity; because it was an infidelity into which both were alike seduced, through a mysterious perversion of their spiritual nature. Conscience — shall we say it? — dictated the wrong. Alas! what cannot this faculty be coërced into? These facts, however, were cautiously concealed from Miss Harcourt, who remained pure and serene as the diamond amid the filth of its resting place.

CHAPTER XXX.

TO THE RESCUE.

"She says
A fire dances before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ear of armèd men." — TENNYSON.

"Where yon faithful watch-fires glow,
Bold, defying, stands the foe;
Still the cry rings through the night,
Guard to guard calls out with might,
'Liberty or death!'"
The German of COLLINS.

SOON after the decent interment of Mr. Littlefield and Samuel Douglass, a rumor reached Mapleton of the abduction of Miss Harcourt, and the fall of Skampton. Of the fate of Charles nothing could be learned with any certainty. Letters were despatched, informing him of the sad events which had happened, and that his father was in prison, and desiring him to come home immediately, to alleviate the sufferings of his family. But no answer came. Mrs. Douglass was very uneasy concerning him, in addition to all her other troubles, and therefore besought Mr. Holliston to go at once to Riverton, and learn the facts in the case, and look after the interests of her son. The woes of alcohol seemed to be concentrated within her doors; and yet, her own spirit was unbroken. Though the foreshadowing of these calamities had made her timid through life, yet the reality of them found her cool, collected, and prepared to do all that woman could do to mitigate their intensity, and alleviate her suffering household. She often visited and comforted her husband in prison, min-

istered to his bodily wants, now that he more than ever needed it, having a severe cough, and showing unmistakable signs of a speedy release from a state of society in which he was so unfitted to live. She found him more himself than he had been for many years; so affectionate, so bland, so resigned, and so reasonable in his views of all subjects, and especially of his own wayward career. He had no recollection of the fatal blows which he dealt at his wife and son, but remembered well seeing and striking at a nest of serpents, which were hissing, just ready to bite him; and that he had no sooner disposed of these than a huge monster came at him, with open mouth, and he levelled him to the ground. Poor man! how sad, sad, the hallucinations of brandy!

Mr. Holliston found Mr. Skampton also in prison, and was surprised by the change which had come over him. "I see," said he to Mr. Holliston, "that I have always occupied a false position. I have been pursuing the phantom of reputation and influence. This has betrayed me into many indiscretions. Under the notion of being a conservator of the public good, I have been promoting the ends of private advancement. I fear I have acted wrong in reference to the liquor traffic. I have not been blessed in it. All I had is gone,— both my own fortune and that of my wife, with all my immense accumulations. I am left bare of money, and bankrupt in friends. None come to my relief, and here I languish in prison. I have injured you, Mr. Holliston, and your friends. I have injured the Douglass family."

"Yes,— more than you know," said Mr. Holliston, detailing to him the late facts. Skampton wept at the recital.

"And Charles, I learn, has escaped to England," he added. "Abused young man! I wonder not that he should have charged me as he did! I have been under a delusion, these

many years, Mr. Holliston, during which I have inflicted all these injuries. Now the just retribution returns on my own head. O, that it may relieve me of my guilt!"

Mr. Holliston felt keenly for the poor man, went his bail, and thus delivered him from prison, and proffered him every service in his power.

"Mr. Skampton, my heart is drawn towards you as never before," said Mr. Holliston; "I have never seen you so near right. You have been the dupe of flattery. Perhaps I, with your money, and in your circumstances, might have fallen in the same way. God's government is one of mercy. He loves to forgive the penitent. I am not your accuser, Mr. Skampton. No, no; I would imitate Heaven's mercy. I pray for a mind to do by you as I should wish you to do by me had I been in your temptations, and fallen into your circumstances."

These words of love fell like heaven's dews upon a parched soil, and raised in the crushed heart of the fallen man his first tendency towards the bloom of hope, and the fruit of a repentance not to be repented of.

Mr. Holliston sent the following letter to Charles Douglass by the next steamer, to urge his return as soon as possible. After detailing the Mapleton tragedy, the letter adds:

"Miss Harcourt has been heard from. She is in Missouri, whither a party of us are about to go, to effect her release. Mr. Skampton has come to a sense of the greatness of his sin. I forgive him, and I know you will when you learn all. Convicted or not, I do not think he intended as bad as would appear. He is a dupe of Gilfort. It is torturing to reflect that that jewel of a girl, Miss Harcourt, should be decoyed into such hands. Still, we must not despair. We hear from Thomas Bludgeon — who is now encamping in the neighbor-

hood where she is — everything to encourage the hope of her speedy and safe release. You must keep up heart, and hope. Everything demands your immediate return.

"Your affectionate and devoted friend,

"D. H."

The party who went to the rescue of Miss Harcourt was De Lisle, with the sheriff, Mr. Holliston and Mr. Skampton. De Lisle felt too much interest for Harcourt, who was now hopelessly insane, and also for the rescue of his dear young friend, to intrust the enterprise to other hands. He took it upon himself to head the party, and was legally intrusted with the guardianship of the Harcourt interests during the insanity of the father and the absence of the daughter.

Meantime, Gilfort watched every avenue to his caged bird. His colonial home was some miles south of the house and grove occupied by the Marmots. But he visited them daily, sometimes in the uniform of a major-general, and sometimes in the cassock of a priest; thus grotesquely blending, in his dress and equipage, the most opposite and ludicrous extremes. He generally rode in a carriage brilliant in its platings of the precious metals, drawn by fine horses, and attended by a platoon of servants in uniform, to protect his person, execute his behests, and give an air of royal state to his movements.

The public are little aware of the heterogeneous elements which our vast interior prairies bring together. All possible ideas of social organization and of religious opinion there seek to embody themselves under the forms of colonial life. High-born and low-born aspirants to dominion there plant the tree of their power. Our continent is a great seething-pot, into which the world's prophets cast herbs of all kinds, healthful and poisonous. But the dangerous compound, we trust, will

hereafter be relieved of its noxious properties by the fermentations of time, or the hand of our future Elishas, doing their work truly and effectually, in the name of the Lord.

Now, more than ever, Gilfort was attentive to appearances, because he was not without the hope of winning upon the ambitious feelings of Miss Harcourt, of whose real character he knew as little as of that of an angel. In these visits he took every measure to enter into free conversation with her. But no arts of his own, and no persuasions of the Marmots, could induce her either to leave her room during his presence, or to admit of ingress to it. She never deigned to afford him the sorry gratification of so much as looking out to see the splendor of his equipage, or the pomp and circumstance of his train.

At length, Gilfort came to the door of her room, and requested to be admitted. But she positively refused.

"What I ask, Mr. Gilfort, is my liberty," she said. "No lady could be expected to receive as a friend one who detained her as his prisoner."

"I give you your liberty, but with this condition,—that you treat me as a friend, and remain under our charge till your father comes for you," said Gilfort.

"How do I know my father will come, can come, or even knows where I am? Besides, I must have my liberty, to go where I please, and come when I please, long enough to put you to the proof whether you are worthy of my friendship. I wish you no ill, Mr. Gilfort; but it is not, in the nature of things, possible to respect you, after what I have experienced, till you have given me time to know that you are worthy to be respected. Nor would you ask me, if your feelings were honorable."

"It is useless," said Gilfort. "I could not comply with

such conditions, if I would; because Mr. and Mrs. Marmot will do as they please; and they have come under pledges to your father to retain the care of your person. This is their house. Have you a right, as a conscientious lady, to exclude their guest?"

"They have assigned me this room, and that gives me a right to say who I will admit into it. I have referred my cause to the orphan's Protector. And now, Mr. Gilfort, that you may be under no deception, I deem it my duty to inform you that, impelled by immutable instincts, I shall defend the majesty of my personal rights with blood. You will not enter my room except it be over my dead body."

The positive, collected, determined manner in which this was said was not without its effect. With all his daring adventures, Gilfort was a coward, and no man was more shy of a danger threatening life. He feared to encounter one who felt such a poignant sense of personal insult,— one who had resolved to defend the inviolability of her person with the last drop of her life's blood. From week to week, therefore, he delayed extreme measures, hoping his victim might be worn out by confinement, and come to easier terms. Every allurement of wealth, honor and splendor, was held out to her, even for the privilege of a free conversation. But it only increased her abhorrence of the man and his principles. Gilfort made the mistake of supposing her selfish as himself, and this was Miss Harcourt's salvation. Had he known her, he would have employed force at the outset; for then he would have understood the futility of all other means.

Failing in these measures, Gilfort brought himself to believe that force was indispensable; and, not choosing to encounter the danger of breaking his way alone into Miss Harcourt's room, he brought with him a troop of sufficient

size to encircle the house, hoping to terrify her into submission. He proposed that Sarah should peaceably resign herself to him, with this pledge, that she should be treated in all respects becoming her womanly sanctity.

"If you do not yield to this reasonable demand," he said, "I will order my men to break down your door, and put you in my power in a way to prevent your doing violence to yourself or me; and, if you fall into my hands thus, I shall be relieved of all pledges."

"It is vain for you to address me thus," said Sarah. "I should be as safe in your hands without your pledges as with them. I shall not resign myself. I will die first. This is the boon that heaven grants me in the choice of evils so extreme. Death, or immunity against your perfidy."

"What! you a Christian, and die by your own hand!" said Gilfort.

"No, not by my hand, but by the ruffians who attempt to force me into yours. I am now free,— personally free, though confined within these walls; and I appeal to God who made me, and the Saviour who died for me, to second my efforts to keep myself so at the price of blood. Whoever enters this room without my consent must pay the penalty."

This announcement struck dismay into the hearts of Gilfort's followers. They felt the majesty of virtue incensed, virtue driven to the last extreme for its own protection, and had no more desire than he to fall by the hands of a woman. All this time the eyes of Sarah were imploringly directed to heaven, awaiting deliverance from Him in whom was all her trust. Though compelled to keep her enemies at bay by this decisive manner, she felt how remote her feelings were from bitterness towards them or any human creature, and how freely she would sacrifice anything in their behalf, except

that purity which was given her as a shield, that virtue without which life would lose all its charms, and existence all that makes it desirable.

It was with difficulty that Gilfort rallied his panic-struck followers to the assault. Overmastered at last by his authority, they began to deal their blows on the outside of the building opposite to Miss Harcourt's room, deeming that less hazardous than forcing the door. Clapboard after clapboard was torn off, and a way was soon opened into her apartment of sufficient size to admit a man, when Gilfort ordered one of his men to enter; but he hesitated. He gave the same order to another, who also declined. All were equally unwilling to encounter a danger so imminent as that of entering the scanctuary of virtue incensed and armed for resistance to the death. It was now dark. Clouds overcast the scene, and veiled the starry expanse. O, night, night! how horrible the crime and misery which thy mantle enfolds! Thy magic influence soothes some to rest, and arouses others to deeds of blood! To the last Sarah maintained her confidence. She believed that God would send deliverance.

Nor was her hope in vain. Deliverance came. The noise of nimble feet proclaimed its approach. De Lisle and his party had arrived that very day, and had called to their aid Bludgeon, with a band of his sturdy yeomanry. Canaudeh, to the surprise of all, was also there to join the company. He had abandoned Terracegreen after the Harcourts left, and gone to the hunting-grounds beyond the Mississippi. Here he heard of Sarah's captivity, and watched his opportunity to join in her rescue. His young blood seemed to return, and, painted and bedecked with the Indian habiliments of war, he proudly marched among the first, brandishing his weapons of death, his gray locks and towering crest waving in the winds.

The assailing party rushed to the onset, headed by the sheriff, who stated, or tried to state, the commission under which he acted, but was repelled and silenced by the onset of Gilfort and his men. The mêlée now became universal. Bludgeon spirited his men, doing fearful execution on the foe. He was in his element, though, on principle, he had chosen another field for his prowess, from which nothing but an emergency like this could have drawn him. But still he retained a marvellously home feeling in the midst of carnal weapons, and the tumult of deadly onset. He broke like a tempest upon Gilfort's party. Club responded to club, and dagger to dagger. Exploding guns resounded upon the canopy of night. Wounds multiplied, blood flowed, groans were heard in the darkness, and grim-visaged death shook his fiery dart.

De Lisle, with the sheriff by his side, pushed his way through the contending multitude to the post occupied by Gilfort himself. The latter, seeing his danger of falling into the hands of the law, rushed on the officer, dagger in hand, and would have killed him upon the spot, had not De Lisle interposed and plunged his gleaming steel into his side, when he fell palpitating to the ground. Exasperated to the last extreme by this event, his followers, thirsting for vengeance, were like a bear robbed of her whelps, and employed their weapons with deadly effect. What with the war-whoop of Canaudeh, the wailings of the wounded and dying, the explosion of fire-arms, and the fierce encounter of men fighting hand to hand in the darkness, it was altogether a scene of horror not easily described or conceived. The Gilfort party at length gave way, overpowered by numbers, and took to flight,—the Marmots, servants and all, leaving Miss Harcourt the sole occupant of the house.

She immediately rushed out, lamp in hand, to do what she could to alleviate the suffering company. Who should she meet but De Lisle, covered with blood. Stretching out his arms, he exclaimed, "My dear Miss Harcourt, you are safe, and I am happy!"

"O, Mr. De Lisle!" she exclaimed; "my friend, my benefactor! — all bloody? you are wounded!"

"Only slightly, Miss Harcourt," said De Lisle; "do not be alarmed."

They had not ceased speaking before Canaudeh came forward, and seized Sarah by both her hands, and, with sounds which had no meaning to any but himself, spoke love, spoke gratitude, spoke eloquence that went to the soul.

"Canaudeh! Canaudeh!" exclaimed Sarah, in perfect astonishment; "is it you? is it you?"

"My dear Miss Harcourt," said Mr. Skampton, who lay near, weltering in his blood, "can you forgive me,— me, so deeply implicated in this foul transaction?"

This first sight of Charles' enemy in such a plight, she had reason to believe for her sake, was all the apology or explanation she demanded. Taking his feeble hand in her own, she kissed it tenderly, and poured upon it her warm tears, to express feelings of which words are a poor index.

"Can you forgive me?" repeated Skampton, faintly.

"Forgive, Mr. Skampton? O, that is too cold! I love, I cherish, I honor the man who was willing to suffer all this for my sake."

"Then I die happy," said Skampton, with a smile of sweet serenity, and who was really happier at that moment, in his efforts to atone for the errors of the past, than he had been for many years. No one is so much to be pitied as he who is deluded into assuming such responsibilities as Skamp-

ton had so long stood under; no one so much to be envied as a genuinely broken heart and contrite spirit.

"Mr. De Lisle," said Sarah, "where is my father? Is he here?"

"He is ill, and could not come; but I have brought one in his place," replied De Lisle, beckoning to Mr. Holliston, who had just that moment reached the scene of action.

"My dear Sarah," said the venerable man, taking her by the hand and kissing her with parental tenderness, "how thankful I am to meet you once more alive!"

"Most happy, most happy to meet you, Mr. Holliston. Is papa very ill?" inquired Sarah, with much concern.

"In no danger of life," said Mr. Holliston, the party having agreed not to make an immediate disclosure of the real facts in the case, hoping still that Mr. Harcourt might recover his reason, and anxious to save the feelings of his daughter in so trying a moment.

"Where is Charles, Mr. Holliston?"

"Gone to England to recreate himself; but I have written him, and I think he will soon return."

"How are Mapleton friends?"

On this point, also, Mr. Holliston deemed it advisable to answer evasively till her mind should be better prepared for the dreadful intelligence. All were much affected at the condition of Skampton, whom they had dissuaded from exposing himself to danger, but whose zeal to repair the wrongs which he had done had withstood all their arguments. Those who had escaped unhurt now devoted their attention to the wounded. Thus, this home of fanaticism and malignity was converted into a hospital, where humanity wept over a brother's woes, and mercy exerted her healing power. Bludgeon was specially attentive to Skampton, and both won-

dered that they had remained so long ignorant of each other's excellences, and now became united in the closest bonds.

The whole company agreed in one thing, that alcohol was, directly or indirectly, the procuring cause of these tragic scenes. Alcohol had driven Harcourt mad. Alcohol had precipitated the good Mr. Littlefield upon an untimely death. Alcohol had sacrificed Samuel Douglass. Alcohol had nearly proved the ruin of Charles. Alcohol then held his father in durance vile as the murderer of his own son, and had planted the seeds of a certain and premature death in his excellent constitution. Alcohol was at the foundation of Gilfort's character, and of most of the evils which he had done. And these were but the beginning of the woes with which it had deluged society.

One happy effect of this meeting of extremes was to temper the ultraisms of each; and even Bludgeon gave up his wild scheme of founding a colony to live on herbs, and thankfully received every creature of God as good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving. Skampton became henceforth an earnest temperance man, and a yoke-fellow of Bludgeon in securing the passage of the Maine Law. Even the Marmots returned in a few days to the cottage, confessed their guilty delusion, and did all they could to repair the evil done. Thus, more familiar acquaintance, on terms of amity and reciprocal alleviation, revealed, what they had never before suspected, that the constitutional peculiarities of each were necessary to the perfection of the whole.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE VICTORY.

"For he to drink had yielded up
His intellect and noble strength;
And now the demon of the cup,
Exulting, claimed his prey at length." —TAPPAN.

"O, friend, that fainted in the noontide! first
In heaven thy fevered heart forgets *to thirst*."
MARY IRVING.

So long was the delay of Miss Harcourt at Sylvan Creek, that she did not reach her home in New York till a few days previous to the return of Douglass from England. Their meeting was a sweet star shining upon a night of sorrow. Both were overwhelmed with gloom, in all but their relations to each other,—Charles from family affliction, and Sarah from the insanity of her father. He had not yet recognized her as his daughter. He was constantly uneasy,—wanting something, he knew not what,—and no expedient could be devised to compose his mind and body. He would say to her, in thick and broken accents, "Madam, do you hear of my daughter? Come, John, get my hat, cloak and staff; let us go and find Sarah."

"Father, I am Sarah. Do you not know me, father?" replied his daughter, with tears in her eyes.

"Yes, ay, well; I must go and look for her. John, I tell you,"—waxing often very furious,—"get me my cloak; harness the grays; come, we must be off!"

To humor his freaks, the servant would do as he commanded, by which time he would be on another tack, and

there was no conjecturing one moment what freak would take him the next. To Sarah he was a living death,—a moving, breathing, and yet unconscious memento of perished joys. O, sad, sad to feel death's shock in the mind before it touches the body,—the quenched manhood, but the living animal! One power in Harcourt retained all its original vigor, and but one,—that was his appetite for strong drink. That had acquired force from his insanity. Nothing but physical restraint held him back from instant death by the bottle. He seemed to crave it with an eager, insatiable thirst; and they had to deal it out to him in stinted measure, as food to a convalescent patient, his medical advisers deeming it unsafe to deny it to him altogether.

He had made free use of the cup from his early years; but, so long as his mind retained its vigor, he never went beyond the bounds of genteel drinking. The man controlled the animal so far as to keep him out of the gutter. He abhorred drunkards more than most men. He had no charity for those who could not enjoy the fruit of the vine without making beasts of themselves. He felt the more contempt for them, perhaps, from the disrepute into which their excesses brought his own habits. Drunkenness, as an argument against drinking, always nettled him. It was assuming an affinity between the two; whereas, he insisted that they were as wide apart as midnight and noon. Hence, he was unmerciful to drunkards, and would have nothing to do with them.

How little did he consider that the incessant contact of the alcoholic cautery with his nerves, those organs through which the mind acts, was burning out its foundation, and preparing the intellectual superstructure to fall with a crash. The habitual use of alcohol through a course of years rarely fails to bring on such a crisis, either to the soul or the body. No

matter how genteel the use, no matter how remote from what is called drunkenness, still the fire burns within, and in the end will work its way out, to bring on a wreck and a crash in some form, and to some extent.

While Mr. Harcourt's mind controlled, he was a genteel drinker; but when that gave way, the animal in him became supreme. There was nothing but the animal left. All the forces of his being went to that; and, so terrible were his demonstrations of physical force unguided by reason, that they were at length compelled to confine him in a mad-house. Sarah did and endured with all a daughter's devotion, till her own life was in peril; and it was not without many tears and misgivings that she finally resigned him to those who could render his violence innoxious. Whereas, the alcoholic madness of Charles' father was periodical, and not permanent, that of Harcourt, though slow in coming, became the final condition of his earthly being.

To add to the affliction of this drinker's daughter, Marldon — their attorney — had taken advantage of the insanity of his client, to cheat them out of their most valuable possessions. The Terracegreen plantation was lost, through his neglect and intemperance. After kindling the conflagration in Mapleton,— yea, after instigating with his brandy-bottle the death of the good Mr. Littlefield, and of Samuel Douglass by the hand of his father; yea, after precipitating the senior Douglass upon his own death-bed in the midst of his days, — this miscreant, this fugitive from justice, who had many times cheated the gallows of its rights, returned home to learn De Lisle's trusteeship of an estate of which he desired so much to have the fingering himself; and, from a mixture of avarice and revenge, set himself to the task of embezzling so much of it as he could by any possibility lay his hands upon.

By forged documents and false papers, which De Lisle had no means of disproving, in Mr. Harcourt's present state of insanity, Marldon actually took away the maternal inheritance of Sarah, one of the most valuable country-seats on the North River. She had left her only her personal property, and stocks to a limited extent. This was an evil over which she never shed a tear. Both she and Charles were afterwards convinced that it was, upon the whole, the best thing for them. Though not what they would have chosen, yet it relieved his ministry of a worldly burden that might have proved fatal to its success. A rich minister and a poor people are social incongruities.

Douglass staid in New York but a few days; long enough, however, more than ever to reciprocate with Sarah the feeling that they belonged to a kingdom not of this world; and that, to drunkard's children at least, there is here nothing but tribulation, whatever of peace there may be for them in heaven. But, the more they were cut off from other resources, the more they were endeared to each other, and the greater seemed the privilege before them of living to do good. They entered into a solemn compact to spend their days in opposing the drinking usages and liquor traffic, and in doing all they could to alleviate others who should suffer as they had and their families. The sad experience of multitudes is what has given intensity to the temperance movement hitherto, and made it so effectual in the lower strata of society.

When Charles reached home he found his father out of prison, but in the last stages of consumption. The emaciated father reached out his shrivelled arms and clasped his son, his first-born, and pressed him to his bosom with the warm glow of affections mellowed and purified by approaching death.

"O, my son!" he said, "I die in peace, now that I have received you once more to my arms!"

"My dearest father," said Charles, bursting into tears; "have you suffered all this?"

"O, yes; but none too much, because my heavenly Father saw that nothing less would conquer my enemy, and reclaim to himself a wayward child. Sweet affliction, sweet affliction, that brings my Saviour near!"

Charles was not prepared for the ravages which disease had made in his father's strong constitution. It overwhelmed him, and he felt that he must die, too. That noble father, with a mind originally of the highest order, with affections warm and generous, refined and polished by education and cultivated society, whose life had opened with the promise of adorning the high places of influence, thus cut down and withered in the prime of his manhood, by the alcoholic worm at the root, seemed to him — seemed to every one who contemplated the scene, in connection with the license law and the criminal causes which had precipitated the evil — too much to be endured. Alas! alas! how long ere this Moloch shall fail of his victims?

"Weep not, my son," said the dying man. "Rather rejoice that your father has emerged from the wilderness in which he has so long wandered, to enter into a society without these temptations. My mind is healed, Charles. The body is dead, but the phœnix rises from its ashes; — yes, Charles, the phœnix rises from its ashes. The animal dies, but the man lives. The appetite is gone,— that canker of my life, that blight of our home,— gone forever, thanks to my adorable Saviour! I have the victory. My mind was never so clear, my heart never so light. My conscience was never so pure, cleansed in atoning blood; and now heaven

beams full upon my view. Dear Sammy is there waiting to receive that father by whose hand he died."

"O, I cannot part with you, father! It is too much, it is too much!" said Charles, whose childish feelings seemed to gush up, and he felt that he could not part with one so tenderly beloved.

"My son, do not break your heart!" said his mother. "Do not think your father beside himself in speaking thus. All he says, and much more, is true. His soul's life he finds in his body's death. His heart's warmest affections, purified by divine grace, now gush forth, to leave with us all the richest inheritance that could be bequeathed to a family. That bitter root of appetite, which has hitherto yielded such a fruitage of woes, is dead; and now the good, the noble in him blooms alone."

It is a remarkable fact, that from the day of his son's death Mr. Douglass had not felt one desire of the cup,— no, not though alcohol was daily used about his person to lubricate the skin and relieve the obstructed pores. He was thrown into prison for the crime of murder. Here he suffered so much in mind that his health gave way, and a hectic was induced. He gave himself much to prayer, and to the reading of the Holy Scriptures. His wife also supplied him with such books as she deemed best suited to his case. Through these instrumentalities, his mind was restored to a perfectly healthy state. He felt himself forgiven, through a gracious Mediator. He did not doubt his acceptance with God, nor did others who saw him. His mind assumed its normal state, and a healthy, quiet, peaceful, unexcited and resigned feeling of submission to divine Providence ensued.

He was not a little comforted and edified in prison by the visits of Patrick Tooney, who, the reader will be surprised to

learn, had returned to the town, and had become as one alive from the dead. Two of his daughters had remained there, supporting themselves by the needle; and through the influence of that good man, Mr. Littlefield, had been instructed in the truth, and admitted to the church. Their father, after utterly exhausting the forces of soul and body in dissipation, returned to live out of their earnings. This was his salvation; for these good daughters set about the work of his reformation in good earnest, not only inducing him to take the temperance pledge, but insured his keeping it by perpetual watchfulness, till his constitution of body and mind underwent a radical change, and he too had become a Christian and a church-member. He had been originally bred to the tailoring business, and had now become the Mapleton tailor, and one of the most prosperous mechanics in town. This man's visits were a real comfort to Mr. Douglass.

"I, Mr. Tooney," he would say to him, "get nothing out of the alcoholic wreck but the soul, the principal part. But what a miracle of grace, that you should get both soul and body!"

"It 's marcy! marcy, all marcy!" said Tooney, with the tears of gratitude glistening in his eyes. He protested that his life was for the most part a blank; that he had no recollection of beating his wife to death, and that his resurrection was like a dream to him, or like an event which had occurred in another planet. Thus our country is full of madmen at large, and will be, till a stringent legislation places the cup beyond their reach, and restores them to sanity.

When put upon his trial, Douglass insisted, at first, that he would plead guilty. The fact was clear that he had killed his son, and why should he deny it?

"But that does not make it certain that you are a mur-

derer," said his counsel. "The killing must be with malice aforethought, to make it murder. And can you, as an honest man, Mr. Douglass, affirm that?"

"No, I cannot," he replied, "but the law, I believe, construes it so, when the killing is induced by one's voluntary act in drinking to intoxication. Many a drunkard has been hung for killing with as little malice aforethought as I had. And why should I be made an exception? The sentence of death is upon me, and what matters it whether it be inflicted by the hand of man or the providence of God?"

"It matters much to your family, my dear," said Mrs. Douglass. "The wife and children of a man hung,— think of that! If you was really a murderer, then we ought to submit. But, my dear George, you are not; you know you are not. You have no more consciousness than I have of killing our dear Sammy. And, is it right for you to plead to a lie, because the law sometimes uses it as a pretext for hanging a man?",

"No, no, Mr. Douglass," added his lawyer, "drinking a glass of brandy, bad as it is, is not murder; and you know that act deprived you of your moral agency. And can a mere physical or animal agent be guilty of the crime of murder?"

"No, you mistake," said Mr. Douglass; "it was not the *drinking*, but the *contact* of the brandy, that made me insane. Had not madness been induced by this contact, I should not have drank at all."

These considerations induced him to plead *not* guilty. The state then proceeded to prove the facts of Samuel Douglass' death, just as they were; which they had no difficulty in doing. The defence set up the plea of insanity, and witnesses were adduced to prove that alcohol invariably deprived the prisoner at the bar of his reason, and that it was during the

madness thus induced that the killing took place. This also was an easy process.

The state plead, that a man knowing such to be the effect upon him of taking a beverage, narcotic, or article of diet, is in law responsible for all the consequences which ensue from taking it; that half the murders were committed under the alcoholic excitement; and that, on the principle set up by the defence, law has no redress for the greater portion of crimes on its docket. It must leave society to the depredations of this self-induced madness. The prisoner at the bar was not only bound in law *not* to kill with malice aforethought, but not to put himself into a state to endanger his fellow-man in property, limb, or life. If he has put himself into that state, and has taken the life of his son as a consequence, he stands before the law as a murderer, and the jury is bound to give a verdict accordingly.

The defence, on the contrary, thought it a poor redress for the state to hang men who, according to its own showing, had by their own act ceased to be moral agents; and that it could have no more effect to deter others from crime, who became insane in the same way, than killing an ox that gores a man to death can deter other oxen from doing the same. Is the sacrifice of irresponsible agents a redress to civil law? Is there any redress known to that law which is not a preventive to crime? If we hang men for the act of killing, during the paroxysms of alcoholic insanity, because that insanity was induced by their voluntary act in drinking, what is it but hanging them for getting drunk? And yet the state provides by law and by license the means of getting the people drunk, wholesale and retail; and it seemed to the defence cruel, after all this, for the state to hang men for drinking,— hang them for buying at its licensed tippling-shops! It thought, there-

fore, the jury could not, in justice to the laws, in justice to the state, or in justice to the body politic, give a verdict of guilty against George Douglass, the prisoner at the bar.

As the court was about to commit the cause to the jury, the prisoner was asked whether he had anything further to say. Whereupon, Mr. Douglass rose deliberately, and looked around on the court and spectators with great composure. His tall, manly person, brilliant eye, and eminently intellectual expression, emaciated as he was by disease and pale with confinement, impressed every one with his personal dignity and superiority to any who were sitting in judgment upon his life.

"May it please the Court and Gentlemen of the Jury," he said, deliberately and coolly, "little did I think that I should come to this. Born of parents who were able and ambitious to give their son the best education the country affords, I had advantages above most others for reaching a widely different destiny from that to which I seem to be doomed. The affluence in which I was cradled was my ruin. I was made to believe that it was manly to take a social glass. I fell in with companions, at college and elsewhere, who nourished in me this delusion. Our potations were deep, our revels boisterous. I studied law, but left my profession to look after my father's business, which was of a nature to keep the poisoned cup ever before me. I drank till I had supplied the place of a natural repugnance to strong drink with a maddened appetite, which defied control with the article within my reach.

"Your Honors, and Gentlemen of the Jury, the state would hold me responsible for the consequences of drinking, on the ground of my knowledge of them beforehand. This seems specious. Yet my experience assures me that the madness does not begin with drinking, but with the causes that lead

to it. It dates from personal contact with alcohol, accompanied with the conciousness of the option to drink or not drink. My wife saw the state of the case, and advised me to flee to a country where society had not yet introduced my enemy. I listened to her advice, and brought my family into this then wilderness country. For a few years we lived here in security and peace. We prospered in the world, and acquired a competence. But the state then located one of its licensed grog-shops near my door. I guarded against the danger for months. My family stood sentinel around me," and, as he said this, his chin quivered and the tears rolled down his manly face. "I fortified myself with resolutions and prayers, knowing that my life and that of my family were involved.

"But, your Honors and Gentlemen of the Jury, my enemy subdued my strong-holds, and led me in chains. I was surprised into the trap that the state had set for me,—I say this in no spirit of recrimination,—and the moment I was there all my motives to virtue perished. I was occupied with an inward feeling,—call it what you please,—that absorbed my whole being. Wife, children, reputation, life, were nothing to it. Had your gallows then presented itself in perspective, with myself hanging upon it as a consequence of drinking, it would not have deterred me. That was the beginning of my insanity; that is the beginning of my insanity in every case. The contact is the conquest of my enemy over me.

"In reference to the crime on which you are now to adjudicate, your Honors and Gentlemen of the Jury, it is due to myself and family, yea, to justice and the public, to say that I had for months kept under my great enemy, till a new acquaintance, from no good motive, brought into my field, from our town groggery, a bottle of brandy. That produced the mad-

ness which fired our destructive conflagration, which led to the death of our worthy pastor, and which struck my own dear son dead through a father's hand!" Here again his tears fell, and his utterance was slightly obstructed; but he soon regained his wonted composure. "On my return, I felt that I was pursued by dreadful creatures, which led me to arm myself with the lever; and, as I approached my door, I thought I saw a cluster of poisonous serpents all intertwined, writhing, hissing and darting at me, when I dealt at them a blow. A huge monster then seemed to be coming at me, of the crocodile genus, covered with great scales, with fiery eyes and open mouth, to swallow me up. A dreadful terror came over me, and, to protect myself, I struck my lever at it with all my might. I was then seized by giants (I give my own impressions), and verily believed the hour of my doom had come. My fears and feelings overpowered me, and I recollect no more till the next morning. When I came to myself, I was weak, bruised, and felt more dead than alive. Soon my dear wife came, and, like a ministering angel, began in her quiet way to soothe my feelings and alleviate my sufferings. I said to her, 'My dear, why is your head bound up?' 'Never mind,' she said, 'you are sick, and we must take care of you.' 'Call the boys to help me up,' I said. My wife stepped out, and soon returned with my elder son George, when I asked, 'Where is Samuel?' She waived an answer, and I had not the remotest idea of our dear Samuel's death, till the sheriff came to apprehend me. Then I saw that the love of those to whom I had made myself most unlovely had drawn a veil over the sad event, to save me from the torments which I have since endured, and which a hundred deaths on the gallows cannot equal." The court and jury were much

moved by this recital, and the numerous auditory were bathed in tears.

"Think not that I detail these facts to screen myself. No, your Honors and Gentlemen of the Jury, it is too late for me to hope for anything this side of death. But, in justice to the state and its legislators, in justice to the executors of the law, in justice to the mass of the people, the source of law and power, in justice to others whose misfortune it is to lose the command of themselves through the drinking customs of society, yea, as a sacrifice on the altar of truth, the last I shall ever make in this public manner, I do affirm that the state of mind which produced what your laws call murder did not result, in my case, from the act of drinking, but from the previous steps taken, under authority of the state, to insure that act. It resulted from the licensed hand that held the cup to my lips. As a dying man, I leave this my true, my faithful testimony, hoping and praying that it may lead to more just views on this subject, and to a final withdrawal of the means of drinking from that unhappy class to whom it is an unfailing incentive to crime. I do it to save the state from the inhumanity of first instigating the crime, and then punishing the criminal."

This speech thrilled upon the audience like a voice from eternity. The judges and lawyers, who had plead earnestly against the constitutionality of the Maine Law, felt themselves in an awkward position, hanging a man for acting out the insanity which the constitution had produced within him! It is hard to convince a man against the fixed course of his ideas. The court, therefore, repressed the *un*constitutional sympathy which they felt rising in their hearts.

"It does seem rather a hard constitution," said one judge to another, in a low voice.

"Yes," replied the other, "but constitutions are a mere reflection of the fundamental principles of law and of liberty. Whatever the constitution is, these, I take it, would be violated, if we denied a man the privilege of buying the means to get drunk when he pleased. And those who abuse to purposes of crime the parental care of the state, in providing for this by the license law, we have only to imprison or hang."

The court charged according to the sentiments of the last judge. But the jurors said, in their quaint way of reasoning among themselves, that they thought it would be wrong to hang a man *on* the constitution who had been made a criminal *by* the constitution. Hence, they brought in a verdict of NOT GUILTY. Thus the afflicted but now triumphant Douglass was allowed the only boon he had to ask — the privilege of dying in the bosom of his family!

FINIS

REMARKABLE MAN.—At a temperance meeting held not long ago in
ıma, Col. Lemanousky, who had been twenty-three years a soldier in
rmies of Napoleon Bonaparte, addressed the meeting. He arose be-
he audience, tall, erect, and vigorous, with a glow of health upon his
, and said:
You see before you a man of 70 years old. I have fought 200 battles,
14 wounds on my body, have lived 30 days on horse flesh, with the
of trees for my bread, snow and ice for my drink, the canopy of hea-
or my covering, without stockings or shoes on my feet, and with only
rags for my clothing! In the desert of Egypt I have marched for days
burning sun upon my naked head, feet blistered in the scorching sand,
with eyes, nostrils, and mouth filled with dust, and with a thirst so to
ng that I have opened the veins of my arms and sucked my own blood!
ou ask how I could have survived all these horrors? I answer, that
the providence of God, I owe my preservation, my health and vigor,
fact, that I never drank a drop of spirituous liquor in my life; and,
ntinued, Baron Larry, chief of the medical staff of the French army,
ated it as a fact, that the 6000 survivors who safely returned from
t, were all of them men who abstained from the use of ardent spirits."

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